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The Christian oratory, or,
The devotion of the closet

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THE CHRISTIAN ORATORY:

OR,

THE DOCTRINE

OF

THE CLOSET-DUTY.

BY

THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JAMES DUNCAN, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

MDCCXXXI.

THE

CHRISTIAN ORATORY:

OR

THE DEVOTION

OF

THE CLOSET DISPLAYED.

BY

THE REV. BENJAMIN BENNET.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN APPENDIX.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOLUME SECOND.

And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued in the Oratory of God.—LUKE VI. 10.

LONDON:

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Of the assistance of God's Spirit in the Christian Life.

PHIL. i. 19. *And the Supply of the Spirit of* JESUS CHRIST.

THERE are few mistakes in religion, as I apprehend, more prejudicial to Christianity and the souls of men, than that of confining the office of the Holy Spirit to the first dispensation of the gospel, and to his extraordinary works, at that time. Christ has promised his Spirit to *abide* with the church *for ever*, John xiv. 16. His presence and help was not to be restrained to one age. As long as Christ has a church, his Spirit will have the forming and conduct thereof. Lord, I would not deny what thou hast promised, nor reject what I so much need. What a poor, disabled, lifeless, stupid thing had I been without thy Spirit; and should I soon become, shouldest thou withdraw his influences, withhold his communications! I would not for a world be deprived of his light, help, and comfort; the continued supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. *Seventh Specimen.*

That I may have the proper advantage of this exercise, and of the subject I have chose now to review, I would make a few remarks upon it. As (1st.) That *the Spirit of God* is promised and given to all the faithful; to all the genuine members of the Christian church. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you*, 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19. *By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. *By this we know that he abideth in us by his Spirit that he hath given us*, 1 John iii. 24. *Because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts*, Gal. iv. 6. The church is Christ's body, animated and influenced by his spirit, communicated from him to every member.

2dly. The want of the Spirit is represented in scripture, as a mark of exclusion from the Christian church; and of a state of sin and death. *Through him we have access by one spirit, unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the houshold of God*, Eph. ii. 18, 19. Intimating that such who have not access by the Spirit, are strangers, and do not belong to that blessed community, the houshold of God! which is also implied, *Rom.* viii. 14. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they* (and they only) are the Sons of God: And it is expressed in so many words, *Rom.* viii. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Lord grant me thy spirit, that great bond of union with thyself, and mark of relation to thy church! the principle of divine life here, and pledge of immortal life hereafter, *2 Cor.* v. 5.

3dly. Every believer receives the Spirit of God at the time of his conversion or effectual calling: He may have enjoyed his common influences and operations before; but now he comes and takes possession of the soul, enthrones himself in the heart; having prepared himself a temple, henceforth he resides in it. *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be the Spirit of Christ dwelleth in you*, Rom. viii. 9. Whilst sinners are *in the flesh*, under the influence and government of sense, of carnal principles, and fleshly appetites, *they have not the Spirit of God*, Jude xix. But when he has subdued these, by that grace he is the author and worker of, he becomes an inhabitant in their souls.

4thly. The Divine Spirit does not accomplish all his work at once, in the hearts of men, and after his first grace and help, withdraw his influence, and leave them to themselves; but *he dwells there*, affording continual assistance to those that resign to him, defending and promoting his own work. This the *apostle* refers to, *Phil.* i. 19. *I know that this will turn to my salvation; through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.* He was no stranger to the Spirit's sanctifying operations; he had experienced the advantage and comfort of his grace in many instances; and yet was waiting for a farther ministration and *supply* of the same Spirit; which is what he elsewhere calls *the grace of God with him*, 1 Cor. xv. 10. O my soul! rest not in any original stock of inherent grace, how rich and full soever, but daily look up for additional supplies. The first grace is a divine flame, as it were, kindled in

the heart; *the supply* of the Spirit of Christ is necessary to preserve, feed and strengthen it.

5thly. This supply respects every grace, and is afforded for the improvement thereof. The several divine virtues or graces *(the fruits of the spirit) as love, joy, peace, long-suffering*, &c. *Gal.* v. 22. are not the effect of an instantaneous, single operation, but the product of many repeated influences, concurring with the providences and word of God, and all the means God is pleased to make use of for the carrying on his interest in the soul. God's Spirit is a *spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ*, Eph. i. 17. He supplies with farther instruction and light, in the great things of religion, and doctrines of the Bible: *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*, Psal. cxix. 18. He not only reveals the object, but enlivens the faculty. The Bible is the book of the Holy Spirit, which he indited, and which he teacheth: Nor shall we ever understand it to purpose without his teaching. He supplies the *faith* that is of his operation, administring to it, strengthening and confirming it, and drawing it forth in lively exercise. And the same may be said of hope, love, meekness, temperance, and every other grace.

6thly. The supply of the Spirit furnishes the Christian for all the difficulties, trials, and duties of his course and warfare: It includes a *divine ability* answerable to every occasion. *My grace is sufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *He strengthens with might in the inward man*, Eph. iii. 16. gives power and ability for doing, or suffering, for every thing the Christian is called

to; *i. e.* he is ready to do this, if we, in a due manner, look to him and depend upon him; his supply will enable us to conflict with every enemy, baffle every temptation, 1 *Cor.* x. 13. *Eph.* vi. 10, 18. mortify every lust, *Rom.* viii. 13. to comport with every state of things; with prosperity or adversity; to go through both without hurt, at least without ruin, *Phil.* iv. 12, 13. to converse with men, and with God; and in a word to perform all the offices of the Christian and divine life, in a manner that shall be acceptable to God, and comfortable to ourselves. O! may I have this *supply!* may I be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: I shall not then be afraid of principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world. I shall object against no services I am called to. The unction and supply of the divine spirit will give me wisdom, zeal and courage for all, and in all. I shall then be ready to every good work, and prepared to say with the *prophet*, when one of the *seraphims* had touched his lips with a live coal from the altar, *here am I, send me*, Isa. vi. 8. I will only observe,

7thly. That this supply is dispensed and given forth in great wisdom, at such times, and in such measures, as best suits the circumstances of the humble, resigned, depending Christian. We are directed to *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. opportune, seasonable, or well-timed grace, as the word signifies. The Spirit of God knows not only our desires, but real wants; and knows how to adapt his supplies thereunto.

O my soul! be thankful for the office, the powerful assistances, and comfortable supplies of the good Spirit of God: He is the *Shechinah* and glory of the Christian church; the great distinction of the Christian dispensation. The gospel is not only a system of the most excellent, divine morality, but it promises and secures the aids of the Holy Spirit, effectually to teach its doctrines and laws, to impress hearts thereby, and mould them according thereto. It is accompanied with the Spirit, which the head of the church sends down upon all its members, powerfully working in them, and with them. Blessed be God for such an auxiliary; such an advocate; and for all the help, success, and comfort I have had under his conduct. I would ascribe the praise of all to him; of what I am, and of what I have done; *not I, but the grace of God that was with me.* And, O my soul! as thou hast experienced the kind assistance of the good Spirit of God hitherto, in all thy past difficulties, depend upon it for the future: And be not discouraged whatever dangers, temptations and difficulties may yet lie before thee. Wait on the Lord, and thou shalt renew thy strength: His grace is sufficient for thee; *stronger is he that is in thee, than he that is in the world.* As the *Jews* say of their pillar of fire, and of a cloud, that it levelled hills, filled up valleys; the same may be said, more truly, of the Divine Spirit: It can bear down all opposition; *the mountain shall become a plain before this mighty builder. Work out* therefore *thy salvation with fear and trembling*, and with a chearful hope and confidence; *for it is God that worketh in thee, by his Spirit, to will and to do of his own good pleasure.*

Two things I would humbly resolve on, and prescribe to myself as stated maxims and rules for my after-conduct, *viz.* always to keep close to my Guardian, and endeavour to derive from this glorious supply; never to depend on my own wisdom, skill, ability, but on God and his Spirit. *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me;* but nothing that is truly good, if left to myself. And *farther*, always to engage the aid and supply of the Spirit of Jesus, as a constant ability for every work and duty: To which purpose I would take care not to grieve or quench the Spirit; not to grieve or resist him, but obey, and comply with all his motions, governing myself according to the rules of his word, and hearkening to all his suggestions in my heart; praying *with all prayer and supplication;* and with that zeal, fervor, and constant importunity, which I find necessary to obtain and secure the divine ability: Favour me, O Lord, herein! *thou hast promised to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask thee*, Luke xi. 13. I humbly plead thy promise, and beg thy blessing prostrate at thy feet; *pour out of thy Spirit upon me from on high, and then the wilderness shall become a fruitful field. Grant me, according to the riches of thy glory, that I may be strengthened by thy Spirit with might in the inner man.*

Of the extraordinary Assistance of God's Spirit in the Christian Life.

Eighth Specimen

It belongs to the stated office of the Divine Spirit, which he performs towards all the members of the Christian church, to sanctify their

natures, and assist them in their duties (in every work and service necessary to their salvation;) for these purposes God has promised his *Spirit to those that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. Accordingly all Christians have the Spirit of God as the principle of a new life, *Rom.* viii. 9. *Gal.* iv. 6. All their graces are his fruit, and by his operation, *Gal.* v. 22, 23. And all their work done by his strength, *Phil.* ii. 13. By him we mortify our corruptions and lusts, *Rom.* viii. 13. By him we discharge all moral duties, and render obedience to the divine law, *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *Ezek.* xxxiii. 27. It was a good admonition of our reformers, who, after the recital of each commandment of the decalogue, ordered in the service book, a *sursum corda*, directing the eyes of the congregation upwards, for divine teaching and help to comply with the precept, *Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.* It is by him we carry on our devotions with life and comfort, *Ephes.* vi. 18. *Jude* xx. And in a word, by him that we perform all the offices of the Christian profession, *Phil.* iv. 13. Lord, whatever thou deniest me, deny me not thy Spirit, as a sanctifier, as the author and dispenser of grace, and constant supply thereof; *shed abroad thy love in* my *heart, by the Holy Spirit which thou hast given me*, Rom. v. 5. May he dwell in my heart; may I be his temple; may I always live, speak and act under his conduct; walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

But besides the more stated and absolutely necessary aids of the Divine Spirit, common to all the faithful, without which we could neither be Christians, nor act as Christians; there are higher measures of the Spirit, which God vouch-

safes to some persons at some times; a larger supply and more plentiful unction thereof, as I may call it; and this either concerneth the work of grace *in general*, and the improvement thereof in a more perfect sanctification; or is granted *occasionally*, for particular and special purposes.

There is a special effusion of the Spirit, which concerns the work of grace *in general*, and the progress thereof; some Christians have a more glorious anointing than others; the *work of faith* is fulfilled in them *with power*, 2 Thess. i. 11. They are *filled with the fruits of righteousness*, Phil. i. 11. *Full of goodness, filled with knowledge, able to admonish one another*, Rom. xv. 14. Their *faith groweth exceedingly, and their charity aboundeth*, 2 Thess. i. 3. The good work, which the Spirit has begun in them, he has performed, and raised to some considerable pitch of eminency; they have not only grace, but *Grace and peace is multiplied* towards them, 1 *Pet.* i. 2. They are *full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom;* as was required in the character of the primitive deacons, *Acts* vi. 3. The effect of which is, the *heart is enlarged*, and they *run the way* of God's *commandments*, Psal cxix. 32. They proceed therein with zeal, cheerfulness, and delight, *walking in the fear of the Lord*, and *comforts of the Holy Ghost*, Acts ix. 31. O my soul! pray, wait, and endeavour for this more abundant supply of the Spirit of Jesus. God has not only promised his Spirit for the absolute necessities of the Christian; and for working in us those things, without which we cannot be saved, but for further and fuller measures of grace and consolation. These he exhorts us to seek after, and consequently these he is ready

to bestow; he commands us to be *filled with the Spirit*, Eph. v. 18. To be strong in the *Grace which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. To *grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. And as God's command makes our duty, it encourages our expectation. I am thankful, Lord, for any saving gifts of thy Spirit, but would press forward for higher attainments. Sanctify me wholly; may my whole spirit, and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. My great Master had the *Spirit* without *measure*, John iii. 34. And though I cannot equal him, I would covet earnestly the best gifts, and be ambitious to have my stinted limited measure more and more enlarged. O may all the good things, all the graces of thy Spririt be in me and abound, that I may be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And as this more eminent dispensation and help of the Spirit, respects the state of the Christian in general, and his higher stature in religion; so it may be considered as *occasional*, and afforded at special times, and with regard to particular circumstances. Sometimes God vouchsafes an eminent effusion of his Spirit, to fit the Christian for difficult duties and services, that he may be called to. The apostles experienced a great deal of this in the course of their ministry. With how much courage and bravery did *Peter* behave himself, when before his enemies, *Acts* iv. 6, 7. Annas *the high priest*, Caiphas *and* John, *and* Alexander, *and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest were gathered together at* Jerusalem: These convened the *apostles* before them, and began to challenge them for what they had done; but

Peter being filled with the Holy Ghost, ver. 8. with great resolution and presence of mind confronts his adversaries, and defends his cause: And with the like magnanimity, and holy fortitude does the *apostle Paul* manage in his answer at *Rome;* he was in the extremest danger, as he intimates, when he says, *he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* He was arraigned before *Nero*'s tribunal; *Nero* himself, it may be, being present. His friends all played the coward and deserted him: *No man*, says he, *stood with me, but all men forsook me; notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strengthened me*, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. God strengthened him by his Spirit with might in the inward man, and gave him a greatness of mind, which set him above the insults of his enemies, and made him fearless in the midst of all danger. The same grace is sufficient for any of God's servants, in any of their difficulties: And it is what they may expect from him in such difficulties as they meet with in the way of their duty: He often inspires them with wisdom, courage, and resolution, suitable to the work they are called to. This some have experienced, in such a manner, as has raised them above their own natural timorousness, and their present discouragements, and left them under a full conviction of a divine hand with them. They found that of the apostle made good, 2 *Cor.* xii. 10. *When I am weak, then I am strong.* God's *strength is made perfect in* their *weakness*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. appearing in greater glory, receiving advantage from the impotency, and nothingness of the instrument by which it works. I praise thee, O my God! for any knowledge I have of this matter; particularly at such a time, when ——

thou stoodest with me; gavest me counsel and courage, and deliveredst me *out of the mouth of the lion.* I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Most High; I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wondrous works.

Sometimes this blessing (the special effusion of the Spirit of God) is afforded his servants, to *prepare* them for such trials as lie before them in providence: Thus God fortifies their minds for sharp conflicts, and furnishes them with grace, according as their day is. Thousands can from their own experience subscribe to the truth of what I am saying. Canst thou not, O my soul! add thy own testimony amongst the rest? Dost thou not remember the special enlargements, and abundant consolations thou hadst in thy retirement, a little before that severe trial occasioned by—this made the burden sit light, clothed thee with armour, and carried thee through the dispensation, with an ease and triumph of mind!

Sometimes the favour is granted when under trials, and involved in the difficulties of them. I have met with a case (recorded by him that experienced it) of one who had a variety of troubles upon him at once, of an extraordinary nature, any of which were enough to have crushed him, and would have done it, as he says, had he been left to the common measures of strength and grace, he had at other times: During this day of conflict, it pleased God to manifest himself for his support and relief, in a glorious manner; and he leaves the following particulars recorded concerning this dispensation. (1.) That it was a time of the most severe trial he ever met with. (2.) That his

mind, whilst under it, was brought to a full resignation to the will of God, and to such a calmness and serenity as he scarce ever enjoyed before. (3.) That he was firmly persuaded of a good issue of all, and had the comfort of the deliverance in some measure, even before it came. (4.) That this was the most happy blessed time of intercourse with God in his whole past life. Many hours were spent upon his knees; and often affections rose so high, that he fell upon his face, offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears; tears of contrition, and tears of joy; and sometimes the exultancy of the mind was such, that he could scarce suppress it: How long this lasted, or what was the issue of the providences he was exercised with, is not said. In the mean time I take it to be a pertinent instance of what I have now under consideration, *(viz.)* of the *extraordinary help of God's Spirit;* and yet such as the better sort of Christians have many examples of, in the course of their lives.

Sometimes the Spirit's extraordinary assistance is in a way *of special conduct and direction.* It may be the Christian's thoughts are embarrassed, and divided about his duty; he has been often, and long debating, and canvassing the matter depending, in his own mind; viewing it on every side; but cannot bring it to an issue. He remaineth solicitous not a little to discern the way that he should choose; desiring rather any suffering, than the least sin; and accordingly applies himself to God, by frequent fervent supplication: At last, God, *by his Spirit*, as I am now supposing, determines the mind, and this with so much sovereignty, strength, and clearness, as gives full satisfaction the decision is from heaven: Many examples might be sub-

joined for the illustration of this. I knew one who had an affair of considerable moment long upon his thoughts, which occasioned great perplexities: Many prayers were put up for divine conduct. At last he came to a resolution; but providence remarkably interposed, and hindered the present execution of what was designed: In the mean while, the thing began to appear in a new light, and the former judgment concerning it was less approved; a great deal of thoughtfulness ensued; hereupon the person concerned looked up to God; went to his bed; but his sleep departed from him; and his mind was so strongly carried and bent against what before appeared most eligible, that he could not but apprehend the hand of God was in it. Bless the Lord, O my soul: for any vouchsafements of this kind; that he has led thee in his righteousness, and has made his way straight before thy face. Keep thy eye always fixed upon him; live dependent and resigned, and he will still send forth his light and his truth: The secret of the Lord shall be with thee.

Sometimes the Spirit of God concurs with the Christian when employed in worship, and fills this or that institution and ordinance with extraordinary light and comfort: He is made joyful in the house of prayer, and triumphant at the Lord's table: Thousands have found *there* that enlargement of soul, such sealing and confirmation of divine love, as has given them a delightful specimen and foretaste of heaven: Glad would they have been, had it so pleased God, to have drunk no more of the fruit of the vine till they drank it new in the kingdom of heaven. Sometimes the Christian has had extraordinary consolations from particular texts of

scripture, suggested, explained and applied *by the Holy Spirit.* A person of some experience tells us, " That being for some time under un- " common exercises, when he awoke one morn- " ing, he had that text presented to his first " thoughts, *Matt.* x. 29, 30, 31. *not a sparrow* " *shall fall to the ground without your Father, but* " *the very hairs of your head are all numbered;* " *fear ye not therefore.* This was so strongly " impressed on the mind, and held forth the " sovereignty, tenderness, and care of provi- " dence so clearly, as to lay all tumults, and " beget a calmness that is not easily expressed." And the same effect one tells us that text had upon him, in the like case: *Psalm* xxvii. 10. *When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.*

Nor are such instances to be reckoned peculiarities; the experience of devout and deserving Christians can furnish a large collection of them: Much less should they be objected against and denied,* because weak persons may be imposed

* I know some are ready to call all pretences of this kind enthusiasm; but methinks it is sufficient for these wiser men to conduct themselves in the methods of their religion, as they judge best, without too bold a censure of persons or things, they may not understand. I heartily wish them success in their own way; but am persuaded the more they depend on God and his Spirit in their religion, the more success they are like to have. However, if they apprehend it their duty to dispute against these doctrines, they should not dispute against the sense and experience of others, who would be as unwilling to yield to delusions as themselves. Nor can I imagine there is any thing irrational and absurd in the assertions above. God, as author of nature, is immediately present with all his creatures, and does immediately concur with second causes, in all their operations; and why should we deny the like concurrence,

upon by their imaginations, and take the impulses of their own minds for the whispers of God's

---

in a manner suitable to our faculties, in the works of grace? Especially when the scripture gives us so much ground to expect it. I shall here recite a passage of the author of a little piece annexed to the Life of God in the Soul of Man, called, *An Account of the Spiritual Life*, which comes recommended to the world by one that has taken sufficient care in his late History of his own Times, to free himself from all suspicion of enthusiasm: "Because," says he, "I have often mentioned "the inward leadings of the Spirit, there is great need of ex- "plaining my meaning in that particular; and it is briefly "this: That all such as are renewed have an inward principle "of a divine life in them, which as it inclines them to all "those things commanded by God, either by bringing them "often to their remembrance, by driving the contrary objects "out of their minds, by discovering the excellency of the one, "and baseness of the other; or by an inward delectation, en- "gaging to the one, and deterring from the other (all which, "with more of the like nature, are experienced by pure "minds) so it also sets them in the methods and ways that "may lead to a high pitch in those practices; and though the "general and constant methods be in scripture, yet there "must be a great variety in these, considering the variety of "men's tempers, complexions, educations, and circumstances. "Now, for our instruction in these, God gives a divine light "to all that ask it of him, which suggests means and methods "to them for advancing this: And they feeling these prove "useful to them, may be well assured they came from God: "Such persons also being engaged in many things that are of "great concern to them, but yet are left to their freedom, "without any outward intimations of the will of God to direct "them, as in the choice of a calling, or any other thing of "great importance: If they carefully divest themselves of "self-love and prepossession, and offer themselves entirely to "divine disposal, and in great humility and meekness of spi- "rit beg direction from God, he will certainly, after some "time of dependence on him, by prayer and fasting, clear "the doubt, either by some outward determination of his "providence, or by suggesting such considerations as shall "incline them to that which shall be most acceptable to him, "and most for their own good."

Sundry instances I could subjoin for confirming what has been hinted, concerning the special, extraordinary, occasional

Spirit, and the special conduct thereof. This is no argument against the thing itself, no more than some men's wresting the scripture to their own destruction, as the *apostle* tell us they do, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. is an argument against the scripture, and a proof that there can be no sober and good use of it.

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influence and help of the divine Spirit. I shall add one from a person of great solidity and eminence in religion; I mean the late Mr *Howe*. The passage was wrote in the frontispiece of the Bible he used in his study, and is as follows, " *Decemb.* " 26, 89. *Quum diu apud me recogitarem*, &c. after I had " long and seriously considered with myself, that besides a " full and undoubted assent to the objects of faith, a vivifying " savoury taste and relish of them was also necessary, that " they might with greater force and energy penetrate into the " heart, where being deeply fixed and rooted, they might " more powerfully govern my life, and that there could be no " other sure ground whereon to conclude, and pass a solid " judgment on my good estate Godwards; and after I had in " my course of preaching largely insisted on 2 *Cor.* i. 12. *This* " *is our rejoicing the testimony of our conscience*, &c. This " very morning I awoke out of a most delightful dream, that " a wonderful and copious stream of celestial rays from the " throne of the divine majesty seemed to dart into my heart. " I have often since, with great complacency, reflected on " that very signal pledge of special divine favour vouchsafed " to me, on that noted memorable day; and have with re- " peated fresh pleasure tasted the delights thereof: But what " of the same kind I sensibly felt through the admirable boun- " ty of my God, and the most pleasant comforting influence " of the holy Spirit, on *Octob.* 22, 1704, far surpassed the " most expressive words my thoughts can suggest. I then ex- " perienced an inexpressibly pleasant melting of heart, tears " gushing out of my eyes for joy, that God should shed " abroad his love abundantly through the hearts of men, and " that for this very purpose that my own should be so signally " possessed of, and by his blessed Spirit, *Rom.* v. 5." This passage is translated by Mr. *John Spademan*, and printed in the life of Mr. *John Howe*, p. 230. If these things do not agree with some men's schemes of divinity, and are b sides their experience, that is no argument against them, nor will be admitted as such by those that know them to be the greatest realities.

I adore thee, O my God! for those specialities of thy grace and favour thou hast distinguished me with. I bless thee for those seasonable supplies of thy Spirit, as a Spirit of wisdom and courage, which I have experienced; for the extraordinary supports thou hast afforded me, under pressures, burdens, and eminent trials; for the conduct and guidance of thy Spirit in such perplexities as I have often had before me; for all the glorious advantages of his ministry, both ordinary and extraordinary. I would triumph in thy love, and make my humble devout ascriptions to the God of my salvation, would set up my *Ebenezer*, my monumental pillar, saying, *hitherto the Lord hath helped me.*

And, O my soul, be solicitous to secure this great privilege, this glory and distinction of a Christian: Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby thou art sealed unto the day of redemption; let all bitterness, wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away with all malice; do nothing to defile the temple of God, or to give the divine guest a distaste; endeavour to preserve that inward purity, that becomes so glorious a presence; walk humbly under such a dispensation; such peculiar indulgences and vouchsafements; guard against all pride, vanity, and self-sufficiency; have a care of being lifted up by the abundance of the revelations, lest a messenger of Satan be sent to buffet thee: Say not thy mountain standeth strong, thou shalt never be moved: If God hide his face and change his course towards thee, thou wilt soon be troubled: Thy chariot wheels will be taken off, and in vain dost thou think to go forth as at other times. O my God!

never leave me nor forsake me: Uphold me by thy free Spirit, quicken me in thy good ways; and always proportion my strength to my burdens and trials: When I am called to work I never did, may I have the strength I never had: Do not suspend and withdraw the influences of the blessed Paraclete: Any chastisements, any rebukes, rather than this: Thy Spirit is my supply, my strength, my light, and my life: O! cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit away from me. I would sooner suffer annihilation, and be deprived of being, than be forsaken of God, and shut out from his comfortable presence for ever.

Of the SPIRIT, GRACE, *and* GOOD WORKS, *&c.*

LUKE xi. 13. *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

Ninth Specimen.

MANY and great disputes are raised in the church of Christ about the subject I have been employing my thoughts upon; about the influences of the Holy Spirit; about grace, the sufficiency, universality, efficacy, irresistibility thereof, the freedom and power of the will, good works, *&c.* But as these debates are often rendered too intricate for vulgar heads, and carried out of the depth of the unlearned, I shall leave them to such, whose leisure, profession and studies may qualify them to judge of them, better than I can pretend to. In the mean time, there are certain truths of great importance,

which methinks I can discern in the midst of that dust, that has been raised by the violent agitations of learned men upon these subjects; certain conclusions, that appear to me firm and solid; and which I purpose to abide by notwithstanding some difficulties in the premises. As,

1. That the Spirit of God is the Author of all grace? the principal and fountain of all real vital religion: This I take for certain, whatever difficulties there may be in explaining the operations of the Holy Spirit, and distinguishing them from those of our own minds: He has a stated office in the Christian church, which he continues to execute, and shall execute in the hearts of all true believers to the end of the world, *John* xiv. 16. *John* xvi. 7. He enlightens, renews, sanctifies, helps to believe and obey; in a word, all our motion in the divine life; all our tendency, and advances towards heaven are from him. *We are changed from glory to glory*; from one degree of glorious resemblance of God to another, *by the Spirit of the Lord*, 3 Cor. iii. 18.

2. I think it certain that good men under the gospel have the assistance of the Holy Spirit, not only in things *absolutely necessary* to their final safety, and for the very being of a Christian; but for his well-being; for more eminent grace and sanctification, and for his higher duties and services, as they may be occasionally employed. The gospel is attended with a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit, and therefore is called by way of distinction, *the ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 8. God has promised *to give the Spirit to them that ask him.* He will give with the bounty of a father; as is there

implied; who not only supplies the necessities of his children, but delights in all their *real* advantages, and true prosperity. Not that every Christian has a promise of the highest measures of the Spirit: He may not be called to those services, nor pass through those trials that require them. The rule is *when sufferings abound, consolation aboundeth by Christ.* He that is to fight with beasts at *Ephesus;* to fall into the mouth of the lion; to be cast into the fiery furnace, needs another sort of support, supply and help, than the common Christian, in the ordinary affairs of religion. Nor are all Christians fit for the like measures of comfort: They neither need them nor can bear them; and therefore God, who is wise and kind in his dispensations, will proportion his grace and favour to the occasions and circumstances of his servants.

In the mean time, as the Christian is bid to *ask and* he *shall receive*, to *seek and* he *shall find*, &c. not only once ask, but continue to ask, constantly ask, according as his need and occasions are; so no question God will answer his importunities, and bestow his Holy Spirit, (*i. e.*) his gifts, graces and help, in proportion to his occasions. If he be called to act and suffer for religion, in any eminent instances, he shall have suitable assistance: If he be called to be a martyr, God will give him the Spirit of martyrdom, &c. O my soul! lie at God's footstool, wait beneath his throne; and endeavour by humble, importunate expostulations, to obtain this glorious blessing. *One thing, O Lord, have I desired of thee, and that will I seek after all the days of my life!* (*viz.*) the gifts and graces of thy Spirit, and more abundant communications

thereof. Let the men of this world divide the riches, treasures and honours of this world amongst them, grant me these better riches; *the gold tried in the fire*, and it is enough. I want; I desire; I ask no more.

3dly. I think it certain, notwithstanding the confessed mystery there is in the Spirits operations, that yet they are, often at least, *sensible things*, and what may be felt, and certainly known. I may know, and do know as truly that sometimes God is present by his Spirit, strengthening, comforting, and quickening my soul, and that at other times he is absent; as I know that sometimes the sun shines, when I see its light, and enjoy its heat; and that anon it is under a cloud, or that it is darkness and night.

I do not therefore think it enough to expect the assistance and influence of the Spirit *in general*,* and depend upon him that he will assist

* I need not inform the intelligent reader, that a great many divines of considerable name and character, and who press the duties of the Christian religion with much strength and clearness of argument, strangely overlook the help of the Spirit: And notwithstanding the gospel is so full of it, very much leave it out of their writings, or at least satisfy themselves with now and then a general hint, *that this is what every good man may expect*. Indeed they rather seem to take it for granted, that all have the help of the Spirit, than to direct persons to look for his help, or how they may obtain it; as if it was a thing afforded in course, and in a general imperceptible way, and attended with no evidence to the mind; and that consequently inquiries about it are needless. How much of this strain occurs in sermons and books of divinity, is known. A late learned man appears exceedingly solicitous to establish Christians in a belief of their own sufficiency, and that all things required of them in religion, are absolutely in their own power: This he thinks of the utmost consequence to them. I might give numerous instances out of his sermon lately pub-

me in my duty and work; but I would be solicitous to find that he does so, and to be assured

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lished. Discoursing upon our Saviour's exhortation, *Matt.* v. 48. *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;* He begins thus in these words: "It is plain, "our Lord exhorts us to arrive at a perfection, which it is "therefore necessarily supposed is in the power of men to at- "tain; for to advise persons to do that which is not in their "power, is manifestly trifling with them, *&c.* He adds, the "proper and natural use to be made of this observation, that "we have it in our power to be perfect, as our Father which "is in heaven is perfect, is to excite and stir us up to the "greater earnestness and diligence in attaining to this perfec- "tion. If we believe we are not able to do things directed to, "in which this perfection consists, it is but a folly to endea- "vour at it. Hence it appears, that there is not a more deadly "poison to the Christian's life of religion and virtue, than this "fatal persuasion, which brings a *deadly palsy* upon all our "powers, and effectually destroys their life and action. And "hence we likewise see, on the other hand, the great use and "necessity of fixing the contrary persuasion in the minds of "men: For this, it is plain, is at least one main and necessary "principle of our religious life, without which we are per- "fectly dead to all religion and virtue; but when we know, "and are persuaded that it depends upon ourselves, our own "choice, and ways of acting and reasoning, whether we shall "obtain any particular advantages or not; to know and con- "sider that we may be happy if we will; that nothing lies in "our way but our own free choice; this naturally fires our "resolution, *&c.*" Methinks this doctrine would have been as safe and as useful, had he taken in that of the apostle *(I can do all things through Christ's strengthening me; by the grace of God I am what I am; not I, but the grace of God which was with me;* and that of our Saviour, *without me ye can do nothing.)* He goeth on "* be not frighted out of your diligence "in the discharge of your duty, by any tragical, but ground- "less complaints of man's inability to obey the will of God; "*Use all diligence to be perfect, as your Father which is in hea- "ven is perfect,* knowing that it is your duty to do this, and "entirely in your power." Here is not the least mention of God's help; and indeed it is but rarely that is taken notice of by writers of this stamp. The reason of which I apprehend

Dr. *Gale's* Sermons, *Vol.* II. *p.* 327.

* *P.* 333.

that I have his presence and help with me, mortifying my corruption, governing and sanctify-

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to be, not that they deny all supernatural assistance in religion, and all concurrence of God's Spirit; but, they take it for granted every man has this, and consequently we are concerned only to exert our own powers, without troubling ourselves about power from on high.

Elsewhere he speaks more directly to the purpose, discoursing on that text, *Matt.* iii. 15. *It becometh us to fulfil all righte-*
P. 127. *ousness.* His first observation is, "That whatever is meant by "this righteousness, it is most certainly something, which is "in our power, and what we ourselves may do and perform; "not that I would have it believed, that we are absolutely in- "dependent and self-sufficient. These are undoubtedly pro- "perties which belong only to an uncreated Being; neither "would I be understood to say, that we enjoy the full use of "all our natural powers and faculties without controul; and "that we are able to use them as we please, without being "under any restraints, if our Creator should see fit to lay us "under them. Neither yet would I be understood to say, "that we are able of ourselves, and by those natural powers "God has given us, and which therefore are called *ours*, with- "out any assistance from superior beings, to do all that is "needful for ourselves, and fully perform the several parts of "our duty; for we know that *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities*, "Rom. viii. 26. And God has promised, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26, "27, *A new heart will I give you*, &c. All these things, how- "ever, are out of the present consideration, and the righteous-
P. 129. "ness spoken of in the text, must be something which (whe- "ther of ourselves independently, or by the alone force of "those natural powers we have received from God, or by any "supernatural assistance, is nothing to the present case, but it "must be something which) is by some means or other en- "tirely in our own power." He adds in the same page, "I "do not deny but the things included in this term righteous- "ness, may be what we need, the enlightening, and quickening "influence of the Spirit of God, to enable us to perform; but "still you should observe, that the text, and all other passages "which press us to the performance of our several duties, sup- "pose them to be, by all necessary assistances, brought into "our power, and consider them in that view only, without "any regard to those assistances." I readily grant part of

ing my passions, directing me in my difficulties, enlarging me in all acts of worship and intercourse with heaven; rendering me free, expedite and cheerful in religion, and ready to every

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what is here asserted, (*viz.*) that our several duties are brought into our power by all necessary assistances, but cannot think we should consider them in that view only without any regard to those assistances. I reckon that when we address ourselves to any duty, we should consider it as a work to be done by God's help, and actually depend upon, and look up to him for his help; without which dependence we have no reason to expect the necessary assistance. The Dr adds, "they "(divine assistances) being no part of our duty, nor falling "any farther under our concern than as they discover the "great goodness of God towards us, and serve to encourage "us in the performance of his commands: What God designs "shall be done for us, by any other superior beings, lies upon "them, not upon us to do; and no doubt they will perform "all his will; and the work of the Spirit may be safely left to "himself to do, who will perform all his own workings and "operations, at such times, and in such a manner as the great "goodnsss and wisdom of God, the Father shall direct." I apprehend something is wanting here by way of supplement and explication, if not connection. Divine assistances are, no doubt, God's own work, but it is our duty to ask them; and we have, I think, a farther concern with them than to consider them only as discoveries of God's goodness. We are concerned to depend upon them, pray for them; not to forfeit them, and deprive ourselves of them; concerned to inquire whether we have them or not, and to endeavour to secure them with us in all our occasions. I entirely agree with what is farther said, "That we not only may, but ought to have our "hope in, and dependence upon his gracious and powerful "assistance, which he will undoubtedly afford so far as is "needful for us, and which it becomes us, and is our duty to "ask of God fervently in our prayer, with a firm faith and "confidence in him." But I reckon it is not sufficient that we ask this in general, and conclude that God will certainly and constantly grant it; and that the work of the Spirit may be safely left to himself, as he expresses it, if that means that there needs no endeavours on our part to engage him to work, or that the general help promised to good men is all they may

good work. For these purposes God has promised, and giveth his Spirit; and as the Christian expects the blessing, so he experiences the enjoyment, and can clearly discern whether he has, or wants it. Lord, favour me herein! In this lies the peace, joy, and triumph of the Christian life. May I thus walk in the light of thy countenance.

4thly. It is certain there is a consistency and harmony between the Spirit's help and our endeavours: These are always in conjunction. The Spirit's help does not make our endeavours unnecessary; nor are our endeavours sufficient without his help; there is a concurrence of both. We are not therefore to sit still in stupidity and sloth, as if we could not move or act in religion, without some extraordinary supernatural excitation. In short, all the duties of religion are our proper work; and the assistance of the Spirit of God is so far from being an excuse for the neglect of them, that it is the greatest encouragement to them and in them. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* We are therefore to work, because God worketh in us; that is, he assists us in our work. He works with us, and we work through him and by him; not merely as his instruments, but as

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expect. I suppose a constant concurrence of the divine Spirit necessary to the performance of our respective duties; that this good men are to wait and pray for, that they may know when they have it, and when they have it not; and that upon a present, actual concurrence and assistance of the Spirit, their ability and sufficiency for every duty depends.

proper agents, moving and acting under his conduct and influence: hence that of the *apostle, I laboured; yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.* Attend, O my soul! to thy duty in the whole compass of it. I am to believe, repent, obey, and work out my salvation, looking up to heaven for grace and strength. I would endeavour and exert myself, as if all was to be done by my own power, and at the same time depend on God, and on his grace, without which I have no power.

5thly. I take it for certain, that as the Spirit is given, in different measures, to different persons, so this difference very much depends upon their different conduct in religion, and the different use and improvement they make of the Spirit's help. What God may do, by special vouchsafement and favour to some persons, I am not now inquiring; but do suppose that good men have *more or less* of the Spirit, of his gifts, graces and assistances, according as they carry towards him. *To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not* (i. e.) does not rightly use and improve what he has, *from him shall be taken away, even that he hath*, Matt. xiii. 12. The diligent hand here maketh rich. The more humble, watchful, prayerful and circumspect the Christian is, in his life and behaviour, the more he shall abound in the fruits of the Spirit, in his gifts and comforts; but if he grow secure, careless and slothful, indulging to the works of the flesh, and by bitterness, wrath, anger, or any other allowed sinful liberties, grieve the Spirit of God, he may expect, as a punishment of his folly, his withdrawing.

6thly. All who enjoy the gospel, have reason to expect the *necessary* assistance of the Spirit. *Our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. *to all that ask him.* Nor must it be said that we *cannot* ask aright. No doubt we are capable of such asking as is required, and made the condition of receiving; otherwise here was a promise and no promise; a promise to mock us rather than encourage us. I do not pretend to solve all difficulties here; but the notions God has taught us to entertain of himself, of his justice, wisdom, mercy and goodness; the declarations he has made of himself in his word, assure us, that he will not, does not lay our salvation upon things out of our own reach: Whatever weakness, impotency and inability we are under by reason of the fall, a sufficient remedy is provided through a Mediator. And when God has appointed us so many duties, all tending to our advantage, and promised to assist us therein, and to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, we must conclude these duties are possible, and that the necessary assistance shall not be denied; otherwise we make him a hard master, *reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strowed.* In short, none shall perish for want of necessary assistance on God's part: None can justly say, though they sinned they could not help it; nor shall be able to say in hell, that though they are damned they could not help it: Such a plea would afford a relief the place of torment does not admit of; would cool the tongues of the damned, and, in a great measure, quench the flames of the burning lake. All there will

be convinced, that God was *real*, not only in his threatenings, but in his promises of grace and help. And this conviction will render them utterly defenceless, fill them with silent horror; and when under the just sentence of God, leave them for ever *speechless*, Matt. xxii. 12.

7thly. The Christian, by reason of the assistance of the Holy Spirit, is furnished and enabled for his duty, in the whole compass and latitude thereof. *I can do all things*, says the *apostle*, Phil. iv. 13. He adds indeed, *through Christ strengthening me;* but then it is implied that Christ did strengthen him; and he is ready to afford the same strength and sufficiency of grace to every Christian that depends upon him, and seeks to him: Not but that a good man may be under present inability, through the withdrawing of God's Spirit; he may want courage, wisdom, zeal for this or that duty that lies before him; want life and flame to perform his devotions in a suitable manner: God will have us constantly to depend on himself, and not trust to a supposed *general help*, or a provision and stock of habitual grace. In the mean time all the Christian's duty is made not only possible, but easy and successful to him, through the concurrence and co-operation of the divine Spirit: And if he wants this help, it is because he forfeits it, or does not seek it: *God will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

8thly. I think it certain that good works, or our sanctification in heart and life, are the end of all the Spirit's operations and help. *I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. All the Spirit's

gracious influences refer to this, and center in this, that we might be excited to our duty, and enabled to discharge it; might be effectually taught to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; that we might cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.* Indeed the promoting our holiness and obedience, the refining our natures, and conforming them to the nature of God, is the great end of all God's designs, and acts of grace and favour towards the church; and particularly of the glorious scheme and plan of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ. *He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish,* Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,* Titus ii. 14. For this he lived, preached, and died a victim; for this he promised, and sent his Spirit. I cannot therefore understand what they mean that speak of good works in such terms of diminution, as some do; as if they were of necessity in religion, and had no influence on our present, or future happiness; when really, if they be left out of it, religion itself is a mere name. We must be careful indeed not to ascribe to our holiness, obedience and good works, an influence which does not belong to them, as when we set them in Christ's stead; depend on them for Christ's stead; depend on them for that merit and virtue, which is proper to his righ-

teousness and meditation: In the mean time we must be equally careful not to substitute Christ's righteousness in the place of our own, and depend singly on what Christ has *done for us*, without attending to what he requires should be *done by us*. This is an error of the most pernicious consequence; the worst heresy, I reckon, that infests the Christian church; what tends to make void the law of God; cancel the unchangeable obligations we are under to our Creator; slur the office of the blessed Spirit; subvert the design of the gospel, and of all religion, and ruin the souls of men: Certainly holiness, notwithstanding present blemishes and imperfections, is the greatest excellency we can aspire after and attain to in this world. And we must be so far from making light of it, and neglecting it, under a pretence of *renouncing our own righteousness*, that we are to hunger and thirst after it. It is, in short, the image of God restored, the issue of the father's love, of the son's meditation, the product of the divine Spirit, the dignity and improvement of our nature. And as it stands in near connection with heaven now, when complete, it will be a chief jewel in our crown, and chief ingredient in our happiness for ever. O my God! grant me thy Spirit, as a Spirit of grace, sanctification and holiness; make me rich in good works; help me to abound in all the fruits of righteousness, *that I may be all glorious within, and have a clothing of wrought gold, a raiment of needlework*. Grant me all the graces of thy Spirit, in greater strength, lustre and brightness, and I shall not envy the worldling other ornaments and riches.

9thly. Whatever darkness men of a disputing humour may involve these subjects in, the forementioned particulars appear to me so clearly founded on scripture, and so agreeable to the scheme of Christian divinity, I may add of Christian experience too, that I will not easily give them up, upon every little cavil or objection, that may be raised against them. Upon the whole, there are two conclusions I am fully established in the belief of, and which indeed comprehend the substance of what has been said, *(viz.)*

That all our success and attainments in religion must be ascribed to the assistance of God's Spirit; and all our miscarriages to our own sinful neglects.

That every man's salvation is of grace; and every man's damnation of himself.

The Soliloquy *and* Prayer.

O My soul! wait on God for all needful supply and help of his Spirit. I have his promise for this, and may be secure of the performance, if I do not myself put in a bar in the way, by despising the blessing, or neglecting the appointed means for obtaining it: *He will give the holy Spirit to them that ask him;* which includes a sufficiency of assistance, power and grace for all my occasions: And this, it may be, is intimated by the different expressions the evangelists make use of, when they relate Christ's discourse about this matter: *He will give*, says *Luke*, *the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. *Matthew* has it, *Chap.* vii. 11. *He will give good things to them that ask him.* God's Spirit is virtually all good things;

if I have that, I shall want nothing necessary for the life and comfort of my soul, and for the successful management of my Christian work. Not that I have warrant to expect all the gifts and graces, and all the measures thereof some may have; particularly not such as respect this or that office, I am not called to discharge; or any special services or difficulties I am not called to: However, I may confidently expect grace *sufficient for me;* an anointing answerable to all my occasions, and conducing to my greater establishment and comfort in religion. And for this, O my God! I would constantly supplicate before thy throne; asking, seeking, knocking, and by such an importunity, as shews a high value for the blessing, labour to obtain it. Lord! favour me herein: Vouchsafe me thy Spirit, and all the good things comprehended in that gift, and I shall rejoice and triumph in them, more than in all riches, than in the peculiar treasure of kings and provinces. And among the rest of the privileges I enjoy, by thy good Spirit, may I have his *special conduct* in the greatest affairs of my soul; be led by thy Spirit in the ways of righteousness and peace: It is my encouragement to consider that Christ's *sheep hear his voice and follow him*, John x. 27. *And a stranger they will not follow, ver. 5.* They will not follow a stranger to perdition, and so as to desert Christ. The Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that dwells in them, will be their monitor, guide, and safety. Lord! take me under this powerful protection; preserve me from all hurtful errors, from every false way: Leave me not to the pride, vanity, and treachery of my own heart; to the subtilty and wiles of deceivers,

whether evil men, or evil spirits; to the injuries, delusions, and snares of a wicked world: Be thou my shield and guardian: Grant me the *shechinah* of thy Spirit: May he dwell in me as my strength and defence, my light and my glory.

Of a Religious, Devout Temper.

Tenth Specimen. THERE are many ways in which a religious temper discovers itself. In general, in a constant and sincere respect to God's commands, and an endeavour to stand complete in all his will; exercising ourselves always *to have consciences void of offence, both towards God and towards man.* This is the great criterion and mark of true religion, the general province of it, as I may say; but then the particular manifestations of it are various; and, it may be, in nothing does a religious turn of mind appear more than *in a constant, serious acknowledgment of God in all his providences, and in a devout intercourse, and converse with him therein.* Here lies the distinction between one sort of men and another, the sanctified, and the profane; the good and the bad; the devout and carnal; that the one overlook God in every thing, and the other have their hearts, minds and affections filled with him, almost in every thing. It would be surprising, was it not common to observe, into what a woful forgetfulness of God the greatest part of mankind are fallen. They live without God in the world; God is not in all their thoughts: Though in him they *live, move, and have their being; in his hand is their life and breath, and his are all their ways;* yet

they have no sense of God on their minds, but pass days, weeks and months, without one serious thought, or acknowledgment of God: And even when he discovers himself in special, signal providences; threatening, smiting, delivering and saving, their insensibility remains; they are still the same stupid, unthinking creatures.

I have been sometimes affected with some passages in the life of a grave and serious man: Giving an account of his former sinful course, he often remarks, among other vilenesses, how entirely he neglected God in all his providences, "All this while, says * he, I never sought to "God, no, not so much in a formal manner, "either for the obtaining any good thing, or "the removal of any evil," though he was in a foreign country, and exposed to all manner of temptations and dangers. When he came off the seas, upon his return home, he takes notice, he never returned God thanks for his protection, nor once considered that God conducted and preserved him. And afterwards, being upon another voyage, coming from *Portugal* to *England*, after a wicked course of living for some years, he saith of himself, "I "had then no thought of God, my soul, of "heaven or hell; but without the least sup- "plication to God for the pardon of the sins of "my wicked life there, or for a safe convey- "ance to my own country, I went to sea, "where we met with great winds and stormy "weather; yet, though my danger was great, "I never offered to God a request, either to "protect me, or put a period to the raging "tempest. When we were safely landed, I "was nothing affected with the mercy, but

* Mr *Trosse*'s Life, p. 7.

" presently fell to the repeating of my former " sensualities. I arrived on *Saturday;* the " next sabbath was the first, which for almost " three years I had any opportunity of attend- " ing the public worship of God upon. On " this day I was exceedingly profane, as here- " tofore I had been: Indeed I went to the " church, heard a sermon, presented my body, " but neither by a thought in my mind, nor
P. 23, 24, 25. " by a billet in the congregation, did I make " any acknowledgment to God of his granting " me a safe arrival." I mention this as not any thing extraordinary, only as an example of what is acted over and over again, by thousands and millions continually. It is the common case of carnal, irreligious minds. Men eat and drink, go to bed and rise; pass through dangerous diseases, perils by land, and perils by sea; are in deaths often, and yet never own God in any thing. If they have learned a few forms of good expression, *as God be thanked*, &c. there is nothing of religion and true devotion in them, but they are matter of mere form. Whereas, on the contrary, no sooner does religion take place in the soul, and men are brought under the influence and power of it, by an effectual touch of the Divine Spirit, but their eyes are open towards God: And as religion prevails in the soul, a sense of God prevails also. They eye his authority, own his providence, and endeavour to converse with him therein: And according as this temper is more or less predominant, they are more religious.

I bless thee, O my God! for any experience I have of thy grace and salvation in this respect. That thou hast delivered me out of that state of darkness, insensibility and death,

in which so many lie, wholly alienated and estranged from the life of God: That thou hast opened my eye that I see thee, and disposed my heart to own and worship thee in all thy dispensations. Help me to attend to this more and more: May I be under more powerful impressions of thy hand; have a deeper sense of thy perfections and excellencies, and more clearly discern the traces of these in all thy ways and works. Thy providence is universal, extending to all persons, things and events. *Thou hast prepared thy throne in the heavens, and thy kingdom ruleth over all*, Psal. ciii. 19. *Not a sparrow falls on the ground without our heavenly Father, and the hairs of our head are all numbered*, Matt. x. 29, 30. Lord, teach me to believe, reverence, and resign to thy providence in every event, and devoutly converse with thee therein. I would humbly resolve to do so; help me by thy grace particularly!

I would own and adore thy hand *in common providence*, in daily life and safety, *Acts* xvii. 28. In daily supplies of food; would ask day by day my *daily bread*, Matt. vi. 11. depending upon thee for thy blessing therewith; *for man liveth not by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of thy mouth*, Deut. viii. 3. I would acknowledge thy hand in my protection every night, in the refreshment and comfort of sleep; and when I commit myself to my bed, commit myself to thy care. *I will lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou only makest me to dwell in safety*, Psal. iv. 8. *When I awake, may I be still with thee*, Psal. cxxxix. 18.

I would own thy providence in my outward prosperity, and bless thee that thou causeth

thy candle to shine on my tabernacle: Bless thee for success in my affairs; for the countenance of my friends, and that *thou makest my enemies to be at peace with me:* I would always first seek thy kingdom and righteousness, and be thankful that these things are, in any measure added, to me.

I desire to own thy providence in my adversity; knowing that *affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground*, Job v. 6. They are no casual productions, no accidental things, but the appointment and disposal of a wise providence: Help me to resign to thy sovereignty therein; to receive them with calmness and complacency; to lie at thy foot, look upwards, do obedience and worship. It is, if need be, that I am in heaviness, through manifold temptations. Thou hast the management of every rod; the matter, manner, measure, continuance, and all the circumstances of my trials are from thyself. I would not therefore rudely object against thy proceedings, charge God foolishly; but be *dumb, and not open my mouth, because thou hast done it.* I approve, O Lord, thy discipline, and rejoice I am in the hands of my heavenly Father, and in the assurance thou hast given me, *that all things shall work together for my good*, Rom. viii. 28. Nor would I be so solicitous to have the rod removed as sanctified. Lord, take thy own method with me; and if this rebel of a false heart murmur and clamour, impute it not to me. I deliberately consent to thy government: *Not as I will, but as thou wilt. Hic ure, hic seca, modo in æternum parcas.* Guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.

I would own thy providence in any severe strokes of it: If thou givest *a thorn in the flesh*, sendest a messenger of Satan to buffet me, triest me in any of my dearest enjoyments, I would submit to thy hand, and say, *good is the word of the Lord.* If this be necessary to keep me from being lifted up above measure; to humble my heart and rectify my frame; I desire to kiss the rod, and adore the wisdom and grace of thy conduct. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest out of thy law*, Psal. xciv. 12. I envy not the ease and prosperity of any in the way of sin and death; *the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment*, Job xx. 5.

I would own thy providence in public affairs, those of the nations of the world, in all their changes and revolutions, as knowing they are conducted by a wise and steady hand, and shall answer the purposes of the great Lord of all, and constitute part of his glorious scheme in the government of the world. Let not the wicked lift up their horn too high, and speak with a stiff neck; *for promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another*, Psal. lxxv. 5, 6. *The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will*, Dan. iv. 32. Whatever projects men may form for themselves, the Almighty Sovereign of the world is still carrying on his own wise and great designs: He is God, and there is none else, *declaring the end from the beginning, and from the ancient times, the things are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*, Isa. xlvi. 9, 13. May I not therefore be afraid,

though the earth be removed, and the mountains cast in the midst of the sea? I will wait, O Lord, for thy salvation. I would own thy providence in the affairs of thy church; in its oppressions, persecutions, apostacies, deliverances and enlargements; in the rage of enemies; in the animosities, feuds and weaknesses of friends; in the affairs of my family and relations; in the comfort thou givest me in some, in the disappointment I meet with in others. I would view all these things with a calm, composed mind, endeavouring to attend my own part, that is, my duty, and leave the rest to God. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*

I would own thy providence in my religious affairs; would daily observe my heart, temper, and frame, miscarriages and infirmities, discouragements, darkness and fears; mark thy withdrawings; bless thee for thy presence, conduct, and help: And daily make thy peace with thee through the Mediator.

O my soul! here employ thy devotion: Thus walk with God, and maintain a serious intercourse with him in all his providences; in stated, common providences, in special, occasional providences; exercising such graces as answer the several dispensations of God towards thee. Lord, work up my mind to this temper and frame; teach me an habitual dependence upon thee; a cheerful submission to thee; a holy complacency in all thy ways: *Let thy will be done on earth, as in heaven.* I resign, O Lord, to thy future conduct, and would be ready to receive either good or evil at thy hand! Order the whole state of my affairs for the best; and I would ever esteem that best,

which is best for the soul, best for everlasting.

Of the special conduct of Providence.

Prov. iii. 5, 6. *Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Eleventh Specimen.

It is the undoubted privilege of good men, that they are under the divine conduct, not only in the affairs of their souls, and that respect religion directly; but in the affairs of this world; especially such as are most important, and have the greatest influence upon their religious interests; *a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord*, Psal. xxxvii. 23. Nor do they enjoy only a common and general conduct; such as preserves them from certain ruin and destruction; but they may expect, if they wait on God for it, particular and special conduct; an immediate interposition of the hand of God in their affairs: Pointing out to them the way of duty and safety. This has been owned by many eminent persons, of great sobriety in religion, who have appeared as free, as any, from the least tincture of enthusiasm. "Those "that truly fear God, (says the renowned "Sir * *Matthew Hale*) have a *secret guidance* "from a higher wisdom than what is barely "human; namely, by the spirit of truth and "wisdom, that doth really and truly, but *se-* "*cretly* prevent and direct them. And let no "man think this is a piece of *fanaticism*. Any

* Contemplations moral and divine, *Vol.* I. *p.* 30.

" man that truly and sincerely fears Almighty " God: That relies upon him, calls upon him " for his guidance and direction; hath it as " really as the Son hath the counsel and direc- " tion of his Father: And though the voice be " not audible, and the direction always per- " ceptible to sense, yet it is equally as real as " if a man heard the voice, saying, *this is the* " *way, walk in it.* And this secret direction " of Almighty God is principally seen in mat- " ters relating to the good of the soul; but it " may also be found in the great and moment- " ous concerns of this life; which a good man " that fears God, and begs his direction, shall " very often, if not at all times find." That devout and holy man, *Bishop Leighton*, in several of his letters, that I have had an opportunity of perusing, by the favour of a friend, often speaks of the special direction and conduct of God, as what good men may expect in their particular affairs. Thus, writing to a friend, that it seems had a matter of difficulty before him; " I know, says he, you will en- " deavour to set yourself on as strong a guard, " as you can, against the assaults you may " meet with from divers well-meaning persons, " but of weak understandings, and strong pas- " sions; and will maintain the freedom of your " own mind both firmly and meekly. Our " business is the study of sincerity and pure " intention; and then certainly our blessed " Lord will not suffer us to lose our way for " the want of light: We have his promise, that " if in all our ways we acknowledge him, he " will direct our paths."

I grant, there is no little difficulty in discerning the divine conducting hand; no little danger,

in some tempers especially, of being imposed upon, and mistaking a strong fancy of our own for the voice of God: Yet undoubtedly, though some may be deceived, all are not. God knows how to do his own work, and preserve his servants from delusion: Sometimes I reckon the conduct *is less sensible*. God leads us to our duty through common means: As the advice of friends; the deliberation of our own minds; whereby we become determined this way or that, without perceiving any special interposal of providence; and yet in this case we may have the benefit of his guidance. God may direct our friends to such advice as they give; and if several advice, direct us which advice to prefer and follow; may gently lead our own thoughts to this or that issue, *&c.* Sometimes the conduct is afforded with more clearness and strength of divine light. I knew one who had an affair before him, of much consequence in his future life; after a long consideration, and no small solicitude, a sudden thought struck into the mind; which determined him at once, in such a manner, that he could not but think it was from God: And the same judgment he continued to make of it afterwards. Sometimes the person in suspense is directed to a text of scripture, that contains a sort of a resolution of the difficulty, which is set home with authority and special application to the present purpose. Such as know nothing of these things may laugh at them; but good men will not be laughed out of their comforts and dependence on God: Frequently this special conduct and determination from heaven is given *gradually;* some hints at one time, some at another; and as at different times, so by different means:

Whilst the Christian is waiting upon God, and looking up to him, and is still wavering; inclining first to one thing, then to another; at last God interposes by a special providence for his help: And it may be by the ministry of superior, invisible beings; his own good Spirit, or angels: either, or both, suggests something that preponderates, and determines him. But whatever darkness or difficulty there may be in the circumstances, the thing itself I reckon certain, and what many Christians have experienced, I mean a special light and conduct from heaven in their affairs.

I do not suppose that all good men enjoy this privilege; much less at all times, and in all their concerns: All indeed have the necessary *leading of God's Spirit*, in the affairs of their salvation, *Rom.* viii. 14. And this is what we should be most solicitous about: But the peculiar special conduct I am now speaking of, is ordinarily vouchsafed to *more eminent Christians;* to such as are most observant of providence, resigned to it, and dependent upon it; to such as are most devout and prayerful: It is usually granted upon much serious supplication, and upon special occasions; in this or that more important turn or difficulty of life, wherein the Christian's duty, usefulness and comfort is very much concerned; I may add, in which also the credit and interest of religion may be concerned. In such cases, I doubt not, persons of a more religious, devout temper may have, and often have a special conduct from above.

I adore thee, O my God! for any instances I have experienced of thy kindness and favour in this respect. O my soul! still wait on God; live in a constant humble dependence upon

him. *Trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thy own understanding.* Thou canst not see into futurity; knowest not what *will* be on the morrow, nor are fit to choose what *should* be. Leave all therefore in the hands of infinite wisdom; consult the divine Oracle, and beg his *Urim* and *Thummim* may be with thee: In all thy ways acknowledge God, and he will direct thy paths. Lord, I plead thy promise: Send forth thy light and truth, let them lead me. *Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of my enemies and observers: Make thy way straight before my face.*

Of Contentment in our present State, and Complacency in Providence.

PHIL. iv. 11. *I have learnt in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Twelfth Specimen.

GLORIOUS was the attainment of this great apostle: He was not only submissive to the will and appointment of God in every condition of life, and state of things through which he passed, but seems to have had a complacency therein: All his concern was about his duty, and how to comport with the providence of God in its several *phænomena* and appearances; leaving God, without any solicitude on his own part, to dispose of his outward affairs as he should please.

It is among the infirmities of mankind, that they are generally desirous of change, and something new: They would be in some other, and as they think better state; would have something out of their state that they do not

like, and have something in it that they more like. And this unhappy, and undutiful turn of mind, gives them no small uneasiness. Our *apostle*, it is evident, conducted himself with higher wisdom; he had learnt, *in whatever state he was, to be content;* not that every state was perfectly the same to him: He could not but find a sensible difference between good treatment and bad in the world; between the faithful friendship of his beloved *Titus*, 2 Cor. ii. 13. 2 Cor. vii. 6. and the treachery and cowardice of *Demas* and others, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10, 16, 17. between the goodness and kindness of *Gaius* and *Onesimus*. John iii. 1. 2 Tim. i. 16, 17, 18. and the malice of *Alexander* the coppersmith, 2 Tim. iv. 14. between the warm affection and zeal of some he laboured amongst, and their after-coolness towards himself, and apostacy from the gospel, Gal. iv. 14, 15, 16. 2 Cor. xii. 15. between persecution, bonds and imprisonment, and liberty and freedom; between the visions of the third heavens and the thorn in the flesh. It was impossible that these things should appear alike grateful to him, and be entertained with the like relish; and yet he had learned *in every state to be content:* He had an all-sufficiency in God, and a sort of * *self-sufficiency* in his own mind, from divine principles implanted there; which led him to converse with God, derive from him, and live upon him in all; consequently not only to bear every state without murmuring and reluctancy, but *to rest* in it with a sort of pleasure, choosing it as what God has chose and appointed.

* Αυταρκεια, Gr.

O my soul! aim at, and endeavour for this blessed evenness of mind; a dutiful, calm, divine composure; an holy contentment in every

state; then nothing can come amiss to thee; every state will be safe, and in the main comfortable. Thou must *learn it;* learn it of God, and therefore frequently apply to him by fervent, importunate prayer for his teaching; and beg he would discipline, and form thy heart thereunto. And as a means on thy part, often set before thee such considerations, as may be useful to promote such a temper, a full contentment in every state of things. Consider,

1st. That God governs the world, and has the ordering of all affairs; such as concern thyself in particular, as well as others: Nothing tends more to quiet the mind, under all the trials and grievances of life, than a firm belief of divine providence: And as this is so fully set forth in the Bible, that glorious system, and rule of his religion, the Christian has unspeakably the advantage of others. The heathens were miserably in the dark in this respect: Some of the philosophers denied all providence; as the *Epicureans:* Indeed it is no wonder, that they who thought the world was made by chance, should think it might be governed so. *Aristotle* is accused, as confining it to the heavens above, and denying that it interposed in human affairs: and even that sect (the *Stoicks)* that were the most zealous asserters of providence, so restrained and limited it, as to leave it of little use and comfort to mankind. Some taught indeed, that there was a general providence, which watched over, and governed the several species, and sorts of beings, but that it did not extend to individuals or particulars: Others, that went farther, exempted the lesser concerns of men from the cognizance of providence. Hence that known saying, mentioned

in *Cicero*, *magna curant Dii*, *parva negligunt:* And, says the poet, *non vacat exiguis*, &c. They thought the gods might superintend matters of the highest importance, as the setting a ruler over a nation, we will suppose; but that they did not interest themselves in the low affairs of private families, and particular persons. And it seems the best of them ascribed to virtuous and good men a sort of self-sufficiency independent of God and providence. *Quid votis opus est*, says *Seneca*, *turpe est Deos fatigere*, *fac te felicem:* What occasion for importuning the gods, and wearying them with your prayers and din? Take care of your own happiness yourself. These were the principles of the people, that *sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death:* How uncomfortable they are, compared with that scheme of providence laid down in the Bible, every one may discern. I grant, contentment was a subject very much laboured by some of them, particularly the *Stoicks:* But it is evident they wanted the true foundation of it, (*viz.*) the knowledge of a divine providence, superintending and governing all things. This the Bible supplies with much advantage; which represents providence as running through the world with a constant sovereignty and care. It is universal, *Psal.* ciii. 19. *Dan.* iv. 35. *Wise*, Isaiah xxviii. 29. *Righteous and holy*, Psal. cxlv. 17. *Merciful and good*, Psal. cxlv. 8, 9. *Powerful*, Dan. iv. 35. Isaiah xliii. 13. It is exercise towards good men with special tenderness and love, 2 *Chron.* xvi. 9. *Psal.* xxv. 10. *Matt.* x. 30. Contemplate, O my soul! this amiable subject; endeavour to be well established in the belief of providence; survey it in all its properties, and thou wilt find it the most proper argu-

ment for contentment, and a constant source of consolation. God has right to govern the world, all persons and things; *his is the kingdom:* He best knows how to govern it; and whatever censures short-sighted, foolish creatures may pass upon his government, there is no flaw in it: *As for God, his way is perfect*, Psal. xviii. 30.

2dly. Consider, whatever state thou art in, it is by the divine providence: God has the ordering of it. *Not a sparrow falls on the ground*, without him; *the hairs on thy head are numbered*, Matt. xxix. 30. If *Shimei curse David*, it is *because the Lord* commanded him, 2 *Sam.* xvi. 10. All the ingredients in thy cup, of every sort, and all the variety of thy state, are from him. By his *favour thy mountain stands strong;* he hides his *face*, and thou art *troubled:* He turns thy *mourning into dancing; putteth off thy sackcloth, and girdeth thee with gladness*, Psal. xxx. 7, 11. However, second causes may concur, and whatever guilt there may be in the instruments of thy trouble, religion teaches thee to look above them to the first Mover. Do this, O my soul! with that reverence of the authority and wisdom of God that becomes thee; *be still, and know that he is God.*

3dly. Consider thy present state may be *best for thee;* if not most agreeable to thy inclination, yet most profitable to the soul. Hadst thou the mixing of thy own cup, thou wouldst soon destroy thyself. Were all bitter ingredients taken out of it, it might be more pleasing, but less wholesome. Such a cloud thou wouldst have scattered, such a burden removed, and art importunate that *the thorn in the flesh* might be departed from thee: It may be the answering thy petition would be the endangering the soul.

O! resign to thy God fully, and without reserve; leave him to carve thy portion for thee: His wisdom is infinite, he knows what is best, and thou art assured of his faithfulness and love. *The hairs of thy head are all numbered; all his paths are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies*, Psal. xxv. 10.

4thly. Consider there is no state of present things, how favourable soever, without an alloy. There is a vanity and curse since the apostacy in all our enjoyments; and we do but deceive ourselves, when we expect so much relief as we are apt to do, by this or that change. We find something pinches, and makes us uneasy where we are, and as we are, and therefore are for shifting, struggling to throw off the burthen; but this is to no purpose, and is no other than the fruitless effort of men seeking rest here below, but cannot find it: Wherever we fix our tent, even though we could choose and form our own circumstances, and repose ourselves under the most pleasant gourd, some worm or other would smite it, and make it wither. "I see," "says the excellent Bishop *Leighton*, "there "is no place, city, nor country, valley nor "mountain, free from that sentence, so early "passed upon the earth for man's cause, *thorns* "*and briars shalt thou bring forth.* But he that "is well shod, walks on the more safely, till he "comes where there are none. But since that "is not here, we are to use the greater cool- "ness and deliberation in our removes: If "your present company be some way irksome, "a greater solitude may be more so, *&c.*" And in another letter to the same friend; "Thorns," says he, "grow every where, and from all "things below; and to a soul transplanted out

A. Bonar's Books.

" of itself, to the Root of *Jesse*, peace grows " every where too, from him who is our peace; " and whom we shall find the more to be so, " the more entirely we live in him, by being " dead to this world, to flesh and self, and all " things besides him: O! when shall it be?" We shall still find something amiss in every state, and if it be not our own fault, may find comfort in any, (*i. e.*) in God, his covenant, promises, *&c.* Nor is there so much difference in point of real satisfaction, between one outward state and another, as we may imagine. We complain of grievances in this or that situation; we might find the same, or worse in another: Nor can we flee from the vanity and vexation there is in all things here below, till we are quite beyond them.

5thly. Consider, that the present state, whatever it is, will soon come to a period; will change in course, and all the trouble of it terminate with it. If thou hast not so pleasing accommodations in thy inn, as thou desirest it, it is but for a day or two and thou art gone; the *fashion of this world passeth away*, 1 Cor. vii. 31. It is constantly passing, and will soon be quite passed away, that it is not worth while to be solicitous about a change. The present fashion may serve for the present time, since a new one is just ready to take place, which will change no more for ever. O learn to moderate thy concern about this world, and the transitory things of it. The time is short, *weep as though thou weepedst not, rejoice as though thou rejoicedst not.* The next state, now at hand, is the only state that deserves and demands thy attention. " *What is this poor moment, and all " that concerns it, to the immense eternity that

* Bishop *Leighton*, in one of his letters to a friend.

" we believe? And how doth one serious " thought of it shrink all affairs, public and " private, and all this present world into no- " thing? What have we to think of, and when " we meet to speak of, but that, till the blessed " day come that shall let us into it?" O! could I read aright that big word *eternity*, and understand its awful sound, it would drown the noise of this world, and silence its clamours in my ears. Lord, help me to look beyond it; to withdraw my thoughts and affections from it; to sit down calm and easy in my state; especially since it is by thy providence, and by thy appointment: " Seeing our great Father's love, " (says the same devout person, mentioned " more than once before) descends to the or- " dering the low concerns of our life, we were " unwise and ungrateful not to observe him, " and read the print of his blessed finger in " them; who hath made flies with so much art, " and is truly *magnus in minimis*. Courage, it " shall be well! We follow a conquering gene- " ral; yea, who hath conquered already: *Et* " *qui semel vicit pro nobis, semper vincet in nobis.*" Lord, I adore thy condescension and goodness, that thou dost interest thyself so much in my affairs! *What is man, that thou art so mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him?* And what am I? a poor guilty worm! and yet thou carest for me, 1 *Pet.* v. 7. I would think myself sufficiently happy, and safe under thy care; I desire not to usurp thy province, for which I am altogether unfit, but repose myself with a calm resignation, complacency and delight, under the protecting, conducting hand of my heavenly Father.

The CHRISTIAN'S *Daily Walk.*

PROV. xxiii. 17. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*

THE sacred writer of this book often assumes the character of a *father*; addressing himself to his catechumens or scholars, as *his sons*, chap. i. 8, 15. Chap. ii. 1. Chap. iii. 1. *&c.* Not that we are to understand him, at least not chiefly, as speaking to his own son; but rather as a *divine teacher*, who takes this title the better to engage the attention and affection of his disciples: In the mean time he delivers his counsels and maxims in the name of God, the common Father of mankind, and under the conduct and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Hence we find the *apostle*, in the *New Testament*, quoting a passage of this book in the usual stile, *Prov.* iii. 11, 12. applies it to believers under the gospel, *Heb.* xii. 5. So that it was not any particular person whom *Solomon* calls son, to whom his admonitions here are directed; nor must they be considered as the private advice of this great and wise king, but as the counsel of heaven administered by him. Thus we are to understand him, when he says, *be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* *Thirteenth Specimen.*

The fear of the Lord is often, in scripture, put for religion: As *Psal.* cxi. 1. *Prov.* i. 7. *Job* xxviii. 28. It is common to describe religion by some eminent branch or grace of it; especially if it be such as has an influence upon the whole, and be a sort of a divine principle from

whence the whole will flow: And of this nature is the fear of God. It is not only a monitor to our duty, but a principle of universal obedience: and accordingly often stands for the whole of it: So that *to be in the fear of the Lord all the day long*, is to be religious all the day; to act according to the sacred rules and laws of religion.

And this includes in it such things as these; some just notions and apprehensions of God, of his being, perfections and excellencies, *Psal.* ix. 10. of his constant providence, inspection and presence, *Psal.* xvi. 8. a regard to his authority, and to the rules of living he has prescribed, *Gen.* xvii. 2. Luke i. 6. a reverence of him, and subjection to him as governor, and a solicitude not to offend him, or transgress his laws in any thing, *Gen.* xiii. 18. *Nehem.* v. 15. It implies constancy and steadiness in our course: We are to be in his fear *all the day long*. It implies a serious acknowledgment of God in all *our* ways, and in all *his* works and providences; and is, in a word, what the scripture so often represents under the notion of *walking with God*.

Endeavour, O my soul! to attend this; set the Lord always before thee; carry religion with thee in all thou doest; let it mix with, and govern all thy affairs; *bind the commandment continually upon thy heart, tie it about thy neck: When thou goest it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee*, Prov. vi. 21, 22. Let religion accompany thee through all the occurrences of every day; prescribe laws to thy thoughts, affections, words and actions, and conduct thee in thy whole behaviour. Lord, help me by thy grace thus to walk with thee;

thus to be in thy fear all the day long: To which purpose I would propose to myself the following rules.

1st. I would resolve to begin every day with God, and consecrate my first thoughts to him. *When I awake*, says the Psalmist, *I am still with thee*, Psal. cxxxix. 18. Not only under his protection; for so he was when asleep as much as when awake; but he was with him, as I suppose, in the devout temper of his mind. I would endeavour thus to be with God, saluting him with my waking thoughts, saying, "In thy "hand, O Lord, is my life and breath, I laid "me down and slept, thou madest me to dwell "in safety. I worship and praise thee, O thou "preserver of men. I commit myself to thy "future care; keep me from the evil, help me "in the duties of this day, make my way pros-"perous, *&c.*"

2dly. As soon as conveniently I can, I would retire for sacred solemn devotion; and would take care, when nothing necessary prevents, that this be my first work: Hereby the mind may get a religious tincture; be fortified against temptation, and be better prepared for duties and trials. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning*, &c. Psal. v. 3.

3dly. I would take the most proper time to call my family together, and worship God with them: In which I would always thankfully acknowledge the mercy of God, in the preservation and safety of the family; recommend myself and family to the divine conduct and blessing, and bespeak his presence with me and them in the business of the day.

4thly. I would apply myself to the duties of my particular calling, and endeavour that reli-

gion go hand in hand with me in all. Particularly I would resolve to be *diligent* in my calling, and as useful as I can in my station, *Rom.* xii. 12. And as the providence of God has set me above the necessity of bodily labour, I would improve that distinction and favour for spiritual purposes; spending more time than others have at command, in reading, meditation and prayer; in works of mercy and charity, in profitable visits, *&c.* I resolve to be upright in all my dealings, not to defraud or go beyond any man; remembering that God requires a just weight, a just measure, and a just *ephah.* I would take care not to encumber myself with too great a multiplicity of business, lest that leave neither time nor heart for the service of God. I desire to consider one thing is needful; *to seek first the kingdom of God*, and not to labour for the meat that perishes, but for that which endures to everlasting life: Religion, and what concerns another world, *is my great business*, which I would mainly intend, and set myself apart for; and only submit to the services of this world in obedience to the appointment of God, and in compliance with his providence, and the duties of my station. I would consecrate my common business to God; undertake and manage my calling in his name and fear. I would be sensible of the snares and temptations that attend my particular calling, and guard against them. Lastly, It shall be my care to intermix serious thoughts with my secular business; to set the Lord always before me, be often looking up to him, refreshing myself with something of heaven, whilst I am engaged in the affairs of this earth. Lord, help me herein by thy grace.

5thly. I would endeavour to improve the company my affairs may bring me into every day, and conduct myself therein according to the laws of religion; be careful not to be the worse for any company, and that no company be the worse for me: To which purpose *I would take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue;* would guard against much speaking, false speaking, vain speaking, &c. Two things especially I would propose to myself: *To abstain from all hurtful converse;* and *to aim at something profitable therein:* To abstain from *hurtful converse;* such as defiles the minds of men, or wounds religion; intrenches upon the honour of God, and lessens the veneration due to sacred things: Such as is hurtful to others; to the reputation of those that are absent, or the charity of those that are present; as slander, backbiting, &c. I would take care not to provoke, or unnecessarily grieve those I converse with; as by satyr and raillery; by exposing and insulting over their weaknesses and infirmities, or assuming an undue superiority. I would here keep in mind that rule, 1 *Pet.* iii. 8. *Love as brethren; be pitcous, be courteous.* I would also *aim at something profitable;* and not only *let no corrupt communication proceed out of* my *mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may administer grace unto the hearers*, Eph. iv. 29. *I will speak of thy testimonies*, says *David, before kings, and will not be ashamed*, Psal. cxix. 46. I would not be ashamed of owning God and religion on proper occasions, but would watch opportunities, when in fit company, to introduce something of religion, *at least in occasional hints;* making suitable remarks on such providences as the conversation leads to; now and then in-

serting a word of gentle admonition, or reproof to a friend, as there is occasion. Grant me, herein, O my God! the zeal and prudence that is necessary.

6thly. I would resolve in the refreshments of the day, when I come to my stated meals, to bring my religion along with me, and still be in the fear of the Lord; to observe the rules of temperance and sobriety; to beg a blessing on my food, to return thanks, and be serious in both: *Mark* viii. 6. *Acts* xxvii. 35. *Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I would do all to the glory of God.* Nor

7thly. Would I leave religion out of my diversions, but manage these also in the fear of the Lord: To which purpose I would resolve to use no diversions, but such as I may decently beg a blessing upon: Would be cautious in the choice of them, and not only avoid such as are in themselves sinful, but such as are full of snares, and do not comport with the gravity of the Christian profession: I would always use them with an eye to the proper end they serve for, *viz.* an unbending the mind for a time, and a relaxation from more severe business, that I may come again to it with greater life and spirit; I would use them for the health of the body, the refreshing the mind, and fitting me for a more cheerful service of God; and consequently I would spend no more time in them than these ends require. And with these, and the like cautions, I reckon diversions may not only be reconciled to religion, and made consistent with it, but made to minister to it, I might say made exercises of it.

8thly. I would endeavour that my thoughts, affections and passions be kept under the in-

fluence of religion all the day long. *Let not thy heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord.* Religion, or the fear of God, will not only restrain from gross, outward acts of sin, but suppress sinful desires and motions within. O my God! all things are naked and open to thy eyes; *thou searchest and knowest me; knowest my sitting down, and rising up, and understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compasseth my paths, and are acquainted with all my ways*, Psal. cxxxix. 1. *&c.* Help me to reverence thy presence: Darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee: What passes in the darkness of the mind is exposed to thy view; thou readest the most retired thoughts more certainly than others can the actions. I would always set thee before me, at my right hand; and not only speak and act, but think, desire, *&c.* as under thy eye.

9thly. I would resolve every night to spend some time in suitable exercises of religion; to make, at least, a short review of the affairs of the day; with such acknowledgments to God in thanksgiving, confession, *&c.* as the matter requires. Nor would I be content to close the day without some warm devotion, and a heart affected with what has occurred in the course of the day.

10thly. I desire always to commit myself to bed, and go to sleep with God upon my thoughts: To which purpose, whilst undressing, and preparing for rest, I would entertain myself with serious reflections and ejaculations; endeavouring to fall asleep in the midst of divine soliloquies and breathings; communing with my own heart upon my bed. This will probably have a good influence upon the imagina-

tion in dreams; make my rest calm and comfortable, and prepare me when I awake, *to be still with God.*

O my soul! intend and pursue such a course: It is the way of life and peace, is attended with profit and pleasure, and has every thing in it that is recommending: Nor need the difficulties of it discourage; divine grace will help to surmount these; and indeed they are less than many submit to in matters of infinitely less moment, and even in such pursuits as are hurtful and pernicious. What so great difficulty, for instance, in thinking of God in the morning when I awake? Some thought I must have; the mind cannot be idle. And why may I not think of God as well as of the world, or my lusts? Why may I not devise liberal and pious things on my bed, as well as devise mischief on the bed, as the character of some is; or let my thoughts run waste, spend themselves in fruitless musings? Why may not the Christian, in his converse with others, reverently mention the name of God, and bless in his name, as well as others profanely curse in his name: Methinks the one should be as easy to the Christian, as the language of hell to the sinner, and certainly it is not less honourable.

In short, there is nothing in this course but what is highly advantageous, every way worthy of the rational nature; tending to the improvement, perfection, and comfort of it; nothing of unreasonable restraint and confinement. *I will walk at liberty*, says *David*, *for I* have sought *thy precepts*, Psal. cxix. 45. It requires indeed a gravity and composure; an habitual sense of God upon the mind: But this is so far from being irksome, that to a soul, in any good

measure purified and disentangled from the slavery of sin and sense, it is its life and its joy. Such a one does not *lose*, only *changes* his pleasures; only quits some imaginary, fantastic pleasures, for pleasures infinitely more refined and excellent. O my God! teach me my duty! help me to meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways; to rejoice in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches. *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath to thy judgment at all times. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way. Shed abroad thy love in my heart; draw me and I shall run after thee:* May I set thee always before me, and *be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*

Of CHRISTIAN *Watchfulness.*

REV. xvi. 15. *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

Fourteenth Specimen.

WATCHING, in strictness, is a property of the body, and opposed to sleeping; as applied to the mind, it is taken in a metaphorical sense, and imports attention, care and caution, in the affairs of our souls, and of religion; and especially a due guard against the enemies and dangers that threaten us. It is a duty of universal concernment, often enjoined by our great Lord and Master, *Matt.* xxiv. 42. *Matt.* xxv. 13. *Mark* xiii. 35, 36, 37. *Rev.* iii. 2, 3. It is a duty of great extent; reaches to all times, and all the circumstances of a Christian. We

are to be constantly, and every where, upon our watch in some measure, or we cannot be safe. We have many things to watch against, as the world, and its various snares, *Luke* xxi. 34. 1 *John* ii. 15. the devil and his stratagems, 1 *Pet.* v. 8. against the infection of evil company, *Exod.* xxiii. 2. *Prov.* i. 10. *Prov.* v. 8. against our friends, when they become tempters, as sometimes they do, *Mark* viii. 33. *Acts* xxi. 13. *Gal.* ii. 11. against our own corruptions, especially the sins of constitution, *Psal.* xviii. 23. *Heb.* xii. 1. We have many things to wath over, as our hearts, desires, affections, passions, *Prov*, iv. 23. our words, *Psal.* xxxix. 1. *Psal.* cxli. 3. *Job* xxxi. 1. *Prov.* xxiii. 31. In these things the Christian's watch must be employed: And how difficult, how important the work! Assist me, O my God, by thy grace: *Except the Lord keep the city*, (unless he defend the soul) *the watchman waketh but in vain*, Psal. cxxvii. 1.

For what purpose we are to watch we are told; namely, *to keep our garments, lest we walk naked, and they see our shame.* The Christian's graces are his garments. Thus the scripture represents them. Hence we read of being *clothed with humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. of the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; are bid to *buy white raiment, that we may be clothed, and that the shame of* our *nakedness do not appear*, Rev. iii. 18. *And the king's daughter*, (i. e.) the church, *is said to be all glorious within, and to have her cloathing of fine wrought gold*, Psal. xlv. 13. These are our garments; and we *keep them*, when we preserve them in a due state, and in vigorous exercise: And on the other hand, *we walk naked*, and they see our shame, when

the several graces, that should adorn our life and conversation, are suspended, and left out of it; and we come forth, and appear without our ornaments.

I might illustrate this by running through the several divine graces, a catalogue of which we have, 2 *Pet.* i. 5, 6, 7. *Gal.* v. 22, 23. *Eph.* v. 9. *Add to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge*, &c. Now when the Christian suffers present things to prevail with him, and the objects of sense to carry it in a competition with the objects of *faith*, he appears destitute of *that grace*, and is so far naked. When he pursues this world with a resolute fondness, through any measures, and in neglect to God, his soul, and another world, his *faith* is eclipsed and lost; that great ornament is torn from him: So when he acts cowardly in his profession, and through slavish fear of man, or any temporal inconvenience, he neglects and deserts his duty to God, and violates conscience, the grace and ornament of *virtue*, or Christian fortitude and courage is laid aside. How naked in this respect did *Peter* appear, when he denied his Master? and how did men see his shame? *Mark* xiv. 68, 71. When he acts rashly and unskilfully in matters of religion, bewrays a gross ignorance of the rules and maxims of Christian wisdom and prudence, laid down in the gospel, he wants the *knowledge* he should add to his virtue; and so far is *naked*. And the same may be observed, with reference to temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness, charity, &c. When he *makes providence for the flesh, to fulfill the lust thereof*; and in any gross instances, violates the laws of sobriety, he is off his guard, and exposes himself in the filthy

guise of a sensualist: When he frets under the discipline of God, and his passions break forth into a tumult, mutiny, and rebel, instead of a calm and silent submission; when forgetting the great laws of meekness, quietness, brotherly-kindness, and charity, he gives way to hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, envyings, bitterness, clamour, and evil speaking; when instead of *all goodness, righteousness and truth*, Eph. v. 9. selfishness, hurtfulness, injustice, oppression, falsehood, lying prevails; instead of humility, lowliness of mind, and modesty, pride, haughtiness, conceit, and vain ostentation shew themselves in his converse and behaviour; then the Christian *walks naked, and they see his shame.*

O my soul! how often hast thou forgot thyself, let down thy watch, and come forth in thy nakedness; with the garments of faith, patience, sobriety and meekness, charity and goodness, *rent and torn?* How often hast thou wanted the courage and presence of mind that becomes the Christian? How often has cowardice and lowness of spirit betrayed thee to neglect thy duty, and into sinful compliances? How often has pride of countenance, a haughty look, roughness and insolence of behaviour disgraced thee? and the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit has been laid aside, and that humbleness of mind forgot, which thou shouldest have put on, and constantly keep on? Hast thou not been guilty of backbiting with thy tongue, of uttering deceit, speaking great swelling words of vanity, when the law of kindness and truth should have been in thy tongue? How often hast thou indulged thy passions and appetites, against the rules of reason and reli-

gion, thereby laying thy honour in the dust! Be humbled, O my soul! upon the review of these things, and set thyself on a stronger guard for the future. *Watch and pray, that thou enterest not into temptation.* Lord, grant me all the bright ornaments, the graces of thy Spirit, and may they govern in my heart and life. Help me to cherish and improve them, live and act under their influences always, to watch and keep my garments, *lest I walk naked, and they see my shame.*

Of the CHRISTIAN'S *Strength.*

2 COR. xii. 10. *For when I am weak, then am I strong.*

Fifteenth Specimen.

No doubt there are different degrees of grace in real Christians: Some *are strong*, others *weak*, Rom. xv. 1. Some are *babes*, and *carnal*, others are *spiritual*, 1 Cor. iii. 1. *Timothy* is exhorted to *be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. ii. 1. The *apostle* takes notice of the *Thessalonians*, that their *faith grew exceedingly*, and their mutual *charity abounded; so that* he gloried in them *for* their *patience and faith in all* their *persecution and tribulation*, 2 Thess. i. 3, 4. And we are bid to *add to* our *faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance*, &c. that *these things* being in us *and abounding*, we may *be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8. Divine graces, as they are habits of the mind, are capable of

great improvement, and are advanced to a much higher pitch in some than in others.

Notwithstanding, I do not think that the Christian's strength and ability for action, in the divine life, arises *chiefly* from the furniture and stock of habitual grace; but rather from the concurrence and assistance of the great Author of grace: *I can do all things*, says the *apostle*, *through Christ*, *which strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13. not who *hath* strengthened me, by former communications of divine grace; but who *now strengtheneth*, and constantly strengtheneth by his Spirit, as my occasions require. *I laboured*, *yet not I*, *but the grace of God that was with me*, 1 Cor. xv. 15. 10. In short, I suppose the Christian's strength to lie *in a steady*, *constant dependence on God:* If *Peter* be self-confident, notwithstanding his virtue, courage and zeal, it will soon appear how frail and impotent he is. *When I am weak*, says the *apostle*, *then I am strong*. He cannot mean, that when he had little grace he had much, and was strong in grace; that is a contradiction: But his meaning, I reckon, must be, that when he was in circumstances of greatest difficulty, surrounded with the most threatening enemies and dangers, and had the greatest sense of his own infirmity and inability, then he found himself strong; *strong in the Lord*, *and in the power of his might*. The case is the same with every Christian, in all the eminent trials of his life. When he has learned to distrust himself, renounce all self-confidence and self-sufficiency, and with an humble, believing eye look up to heaven, and set his hope on God; *then is he strong*. God says to him, my

grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness. Some have compared, not unfitly, the presumptuous sinner to the *hare*, that relies on her own swiftness * for safety; and the humble Christian to the *rabbit*, that, in her danger, takes sanctuary in the rock. Lord! teach me the great secret of dependence on thyself: Whatever improvements I have made in wisdom, or fancy I have made, I would not lean to my own understanding, but trust in the Lord with all my heart. I would not rely on my own resolution or courage, on any of the attainments, which by thy grace I have already made; but would consider my springs are in thee, and all my sufficiency from thee: Accordingly I desire to wait upon thee, that I may daily renew my strength; run, and not be weary; walk, and not faint. Help me to live believing, resigning, depending; and the more reduced and emptied of self I am, the more I distrust my own arm, the more reason I have to expect the help of thine. *When I am weak, then am I strong.*

* *Pedibus petit ille salutem.*

Of the Excellency of Holiness, Obedience, and good Works.

PSAL. xlv. 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.*

IT is matter of surprise, that any one who are acquainted with their Bible, and take that for the rule of their religion, should speak so contemptibly as they do of obedience and good *Sixteenth Specimen.*

works: As if to recommend and press them was legalism, and to study and practise them vain and needless. Different reasons, I suppose, may be assigned for this humour, the depreciating obedience, or good works.

1st. Some are led into it from a mistaken notion of humility; as if they might not think meanly of themselves, without undervaluing the grace of God; and despise themselves for their own deformities and blemishes, without denying the beauty and excellency of the divine image. In short, humility, as it respects this matter, consists not in low thoughts of holiness and obedience, but in a just resentment of our little attainments therein.

2dly. Some seem to think a zeal for good works and obedience derogates from the merits of Christ, the completeness of his righteousness; as if our works and obedience could safely stand in no place, unless they be set in Christ's place; and could signify *nothing*, unless they signify *every thing*. Christ's obedience and righteousness are of a distinct consideration from ours, have an higher office and sphere, belong to another covenant, and serve different purposes. He fully accomplished what he undertook; his work is finished and accepted: Nor does it need, or can admit of any supplement from us. Our righteousness is inferior and subordinate, but equally necessary in the covenant wherein we stand, and for the ends it refers to, with the perfect, unspotted righteousness of the Mediator in his covenant.

3dly. Others are betrayed into a neglect and disparagement of obedience, holiness, and good works, from a fancy, that an obedience, so defective as theirs, is worthless, and will avail

them nothing. They pretend they dare appear before a perfectly righteous, and holy God, in no righteousness but what is perfect; and their own righteousness being, at best, so very imperfect, they are apt to conclude it useless and worthless. And hence a confident reliance on the righteousness of Christ, which they take to be the faith the gospel requires, passes with them for every thing. But if by *perfect righteousness* they mean *absolutely perfect*, it is certain the angels have no such righteousness: None are perfect as God is perfect. *He charges his angels with folly*, Job iv. 18. Every one appears before God in the state and condition he is in. The Mediator in his proper excellencies and glory, the angels in theirs, the spirits of the just in theirs; which are more or less, according to their different attainments. In the mean time, no creature has a perfect righteousness, nor can he appear before God in any such righteousness: But if he be *truly* righteous, he is accepted of God, notwithstanding defects: *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and his countenance beholdeth the upright*, Psal. xi. 7. He loveth all the righteous, and that according to the measure of their real righteousness and goodness; and though none have a perfect righteousness, all good men have so much righteousness, (*i. e.*) likeness of God, conformity to his nature and will, rectitude and holiness of heart and frame, as renders them fit objects of his favour and love. Indeed mankind having apostatized, *all having sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, Rom. iii. 23. having departed from the original law of righteousness, the rule of perfect innocent nature; all need the grace of the Mediator, and of the new dispensation of

religion, established through him: His perfect righteousness is the foundation of that covenant in which they are, and of the hopes they have of acceptance with God. The most righteous are sinners, and are saved by mercy and *grace, through the redemption* that is in Christ, *Eph.* i. 7. God hath *chosen us, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love:* But as our holiness, in its greatest advances, has its flaws and imperfections in this life, *he hath made us accepted in the beloved*, Eph. i. 4. 6.

Other things might be taken notice of as contributing to this mistake, about good works and obedience; but I reckon them all temptations, and as such would guard against them. I must give away my Bible, and change my notion of religion, and even of heaven, before I can come into their measures, that would represent good works as unnecessary, and holiness of little worth: Certainly I may be humble and vile in my own eyes, and yet maintain a reverence for holiness and obedience; and indeed I would therefore think myself vile, because I have no more of it. I may reserve to the Lord Jesus the glory of his office, and triumph in his righteousness, and yet not neglect a subordinate, personal righteousness of my own; without which I can have no interest in his righteousness, or title to his salvation: His righteousness was not designed to supersede ours, nor must it be substituted in its stead; in many things it was the pattern and rule of our righteousness, and in all an encouragement and excitement to it. When we see God would not pardon the violations of his law, till his Son had done honour to it by a perfect obedience, nor receive sinners into favour, but upon the atonement he made;

we may be sure he will not forgive the impenitent, nor save the unholy. In short, Christ's righteousness was to make way for ours, to encourage it, not to exclude it.

O my soul! let nothing tempt thee to low thoughts of that which is thy greatest excellency, and should be thy constant ambition, *viz. the glory within, the clothing of wrought gold:* Let nothing divert thee from the general comprehensive duty and business of life, *the following holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

There is an intrinsic value and goodness in holiness and obedience: To love God with all our heart, soul, and mind; to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present, evil world; as it is the great lesson the gospel teaches, so it is a duty of unchangeable obligation, arising out of the nature and reason of things. Whilst God is what he is, (*viz.*) a being of infinite perfection, and man continues such a creature as God has made him, placed in such relations as he stands in, both towards God and his fellow-creatures, he is everlastingly obliged to all the duties of godliness, (*i. e.* to love, fear, reverence, worship, trust, and obey God), to live according to the rules of justice and mercy with his neighbour, and govern himself by the laws of sobriety, temperance, *&c.* These are duties that have a natural decency and fitness in them, and can never cease to be the duties of reasonable creatures.

Nor were they ever dispensed with under any dispensation of religion; even the law of ceremonies, given by *Moses* to the *Jews*, had many documents of the necessity of moral holiness and obedience: And when the duties of this nature

were neglected, all their zeal for external services became vain and ineffectual, as is evident from the sermons of the prophets; not to say that it might be part of the design of God, in appointing them such numerous rites (some of which, probably, they knew no other reason for, but the pleasure of the lawgiver), to train them up to an entire implicit subjection to his own will, which is the substance of all obedience. I might add, their sacrifices, as means of absolution, were also arguments against sin, and for obedience. The death of the sacrifice was an admonition to him that brought it, concerning the evil of sin, and his own desert as a sinner, and called upon him to repent and reform; to which it was also a motive, as it gave him grounds to hope for the divine favour: *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*, Psalm cxxx. 4. So that even this state of religion, which seemed to have the least of morality in it, not only supposed and included moral duties and obedience, but was calculated to promote them.

And it is evident, even to a demonstration, that this also is the great design of the gospel, namely, the advancing of holiness and obedience. It is the design of Christ's life, doctrine, miracles, death, and sacrifice; of his advocacy with the Father, and of the whole office of the Paraclete, or Spirit of God, *Eph.* v. 26, 27. *Tit.* ii. 14. *Gal.* v. 22, 23. *We are chosen, that we might be holy*, Eph. i. 4. *Called with an holy calling*, 2 Tim. i. 9. *Are created in Christ Jesus unto good works; which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them*, Eph. ii. 10. *We are saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 5. "God hath ap-

" pointed," says Dr. * *Owen*, " that holiness " shall be the means, the way to that eternal " life, which, as in itself, and originally it is " his gift by Jesus Christ; so with regard to his " constitution of our obedience, as the means " of attaining it, is a *reward*, and God in bestow- " ing of it a *rewarder;* though it be neither the " cause, matter, or condition of our justifica- " tion, yet it is the way appointed of God for " us to walk in, for the obtaining of salvation: " And therefore he that hath hope of eternal " life, *purifieth himself as he is pure:* And none " shall ever come to that end, who walketh not " in that way; *for without holiness*, it is impos- " sible to see God.

* Communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, p. 213.

In short, the scripture every where represents the necessity of holiness, obedience, and moral righteousness, comments upon its excellency in the strongest terms, *Eccl.* xii. 13. *Isa.* i. 16, 17, 18. *Matt.* vii. 22, 23. *Rom.* ii. 6—12. 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10, 11. *Heb.* v. 9. 1 *John* iii. 7. *Rev.* xxii. 14. Indeed the whole Bible runs in this strain; it is the voice of both Testaments: In a word, *holiness* is the image of God restored, *Eph.* iv. 24. the great ornament of our nature, *Psal.* xlv. 13. our preparation for heaven, *Matt.* v. 8. and a good measure of heaven itself, *Psal.* xvii. 1. 5. *Heb.* xii. 23.

O my God! teach me thy statutes; hide not thy commandments from me; guide me in the way that I should chuse; may a sense of the excellency of holiness attract my desires, raise my esteem, and quicken my pursuits; and may a sense of my own imperfections and meanness lead me to adore the provisions of thy grace; to depend on the righteousness, and plead the merit of my Redeemer. I would do every thing

in the name of Christ; believe, repent, obey, still acting faith in his blood, applying to him as my peace-maker, and advocate with the Father; would live and die *with my hand upon the head of that glorious victim.* This humility and recumbence becomes my state; it is thy will and appointment, part of my obedience and righteousness. Lord, form and frame me according to thy gospel; may I perfect holiness in thy fear, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Of Habitual Repentance.

Isa. lvii. 15. *Thus says the high and lofty One, I dwell in the high and holy Place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one.*

Seventeenth Specimen.

Repentance, in the theological scripture sense, is the sinner's return to God, and to his duty. Sin is a digression from the paths of God's commandments, makes a chasm or breach in the course of our obedience; repentance brings us back, and sets us in the way again. There are several adjuncts and circumstances of repentance, which men are apt to rest in, instead of the thing itself: Such as confession, tears, and other expressions of humiliation; these often accompany repentance, but are not repentance; even *godly sorrow* is something distinct from it, as the *apostle* intimates, 2 Cor. vii. 10. *It worketh repentance.*

Besides the *first* and *original* repentance, as I may call it, a repentance from dead works; which includes a change of mind, and a change of life consequent thereupon, and is the same with conversion; there is an after, and *habitual repentance:* The former is the sinner's entering upon a course of religion; is one of his first works, and cannot properly be repeated; *just persons need no repentance*, Luke xv. 7. But the other, (*viz.*) *the habitual repentance*, concerns every good man, and will be his duty as long as he is in a state of sin and imperfection; and I reckon it consists in what the scripture calls *poverty of spirit*, (*viz.*) in great lowliness, humility, and self-abasement; a temper, which, as it well becomes the most righteous person upon earth, so it is an ornament in the sight of God of great price, *Matt.* v. 3. *Isa.* lvii. 15. *Isa.* lxvi. 2. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* All true Christians have something of this spirit, though their attainments are different in this, as well as in other excellencies: All are humbled and abased; all are poor in spirit, and live repenting, though not alike so.

The foundation of this temper, which I have chose to call *habitual repentance*, is laid in the first humbling work of grace upon the soul. *Saul* the *Pharisee* was cured of his pride, when God touched his heart from heaven; not that he needed no farther discipline: He was afterwards in danger of being lifted up above measure; to prevent which, he had a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. The Christian is at first humbled, reduced, and laid low, emptied of self in some measure; but ordinarily he passes through a variety of humbling

providences, appointed by God for that purpose, before he is brought to a confirmed humility. It is one of the more sublime graces, notwithstanding its name; what belongs to Christians of the highest form in religion, and is the result of much experience.

It arises from a nearer view of the divine excellency, *Job* xlii. 5, 6. from a consideration of the purity and perfection of the divine law, *Rom.* vii. 14. from the sense the Christian has of his own vileness, meanness, and unworthiness, when he compares himself with God, the purity of his nature, and of his law: Such infirmities as others overlook, often throw him into a posture of the deepest abasement; as the motions of pride, envy, vanity, uncharitableness, want of devotion in divine worship, disorderly affections, ungoverned passions, *&c.* It arises from a remembrance of former sins; the Christian frequently returns to these in his thoughts, and drops a tear over them. *I was a blasphemer*, says the *apostle*, *a persecutor, and injurious:* Hereupon, though he had obtained mercy, he styles himself *the chief of sinners*, 1 *Tim.* i. 13. 15. So *David*, though God *had put away his sin*, and told him he *should not die*, 2 Sam. xii. 13. yet he himself leaves it on record in a penitential psalm (*Psal.* li.), which, no question, was often the subject of a humbling meditation to him. In a word, the Christian falls so much short of what he would be and do, and of what he purposes and proposes to himself, that the consideration thereof exceedingly humbles him: He aims high, has great things in view; entire conquest over his corruptions, a constant rectitude of heart and frame, a readiness to every good work; a disposition and ability for all du-

ties, both towards God and man: But, alas! how far does he drop short! How often does he fall in the dirt! *He finds a law in his members warring against the law of his mind; the flesh lusting against the spirit, so that he cannot do the things he would:* And this abases him, lays him low, and keeps him low. Hence he cries out, *O wretched man! who shall deliver me?* He cannot reach the mark he aims at; so far from it, that he thinks he has done as good as nothing; and therefore, *forgetting the things that are behind*, looking upon past attainments as of little account, he presses forward.

And O! how suitable such a temper to the present state of things with Christians! even the best of them! how suitable to myself in particular, compassed about with so many infirmities! Lord, grant me such a sight of myself, as may effectually humble me; may I not think myself increased in goods, to be rich, and have need of nothing, when I am poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked: Help me to anoint my eyes with eye-salve, that I may see. I am indeed poor; may I have a true sense of it, and a poverty of spirit, a contrition of heart answerable to my case.

Habitual repentance, or the contrite spirit, where it prevails, will not be concealed, but has many ways of expression; particularly it shews itself in strains of great self-abasement. *I am carnal*, says the *apostle*, Rom. vii. 14. *the chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. *less than the least of all saints*, Eph. iii. 8. And as if he was not yet low enough; we find him elsewhere humbling himself even to annihilation, 2 *Cor.* xii. 11. Pity a poor worm and devil. Lord, here is a poor hell-hound and devil lying at thy foot; expres-

sions, frequent in the devotions of some penitents I have read of: And though such forms, in themselves, are no certain tokens of humility; yet, when the inward frame answers them, as it sometimes exceeds them, they have an excellency in them. Thou art heaven, but I am hell, says the martyr.

It shews itself in a meekness and quiet submission, not only under the afflicting hand of God, but under the oppressing, injurious hand of man. The humble Christian, that daily lays himself in the dust, can bear it when others do so too.

It shews itself in admiring thoughts of the divine bounty, both in common providence and in special instances of favour. *I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, thou hast shewed unto thy servant*, Gen. xxxii. 10. *Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* 1 Chron. xvii. 16. And says the *apostle* to me, *who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*, Eph. iii. 8. He that is humble, and of a contrite spirit, sets another value upon mercies than pride will agree to: When God punishes, he owns it is less than sin deserves; and when he blesses, he celebrates grace in it; rich, sovereign grace, grace that he wants a name for, sufficient to express the sense he has of the thing.

It shews itself in worship, and in the manner of the Christian's addresses to God. Words can but faintly represent the abasement and humility with which men of this spirit approach the Most High: They are all *publicans* in this respect, *standing afar off, smiting on the breast*, and cry-

ing, *God be merciful to* us *sinners*, Luke xviii. 13. And sometimes the divine passion lays them prostrate on the face, and vents itself in a flood of tears. *They will not lift up so much as their eyes to heaven.* It was not only the language of his own heart, but that of many others, which a * devout person expresses, in a letter to his friend; and as it contains the substance of what I have been saying, I shall here subjoin it:

* Bishop *Leighton.*

"I have nothing to say of affairs private or "public, and to strike up to discourses of de- "vótion; alas! what is here to be said, but "what you sufficiently know, and daily think? "And I am beaten back, if I had a mind to "speak of such things, by the sense of so great "deficiency, in doing those things that the "most ignorant among Christians cannot but "know. Instead of all fine notions I fly to "Κύριε ἐλέησον, Χριστὲ ἐλέησον; Lord, have mercy. "I think them the greatest heroes, and most "excellent persons in the world, that attain to "high degrees of pure contemplation and di- "vine love: But next to these, them that, in "aspiring to that, and falling short of it, fall "down into deep humility and self-contempt. "And I believe that they who sink lowest into "that deep, stand nearest to advancement to "those other heights; for that great King, who "is the fountain of honour, has given us this "character of himself, that he resisteth the "proud, but gives grace to the humble. Fare- "well, my dear friend, and be so charitable as "sometimes, in your addresses upwards, to re- "member a poor caitiff, who no day forgets "you."

It shews itself in frequent, solemn confessions and acknowledgments of sin, in which the heart

and life is laid open, and all the vileness thereof enlarged upon in strains of humiliation, that some Christians understand; but no words can interpret to strangers and the inexperienced.

It shews itself in an habitual gravity and composure of mind: Indeed there is more or less of this, according to persons natural or acquired tempers. Nor must it be thought that the contrition and humility I am speaking of, excludes cheerfulness and rejoicing; as in the midst of mirth the heart of the sinner is often sad; so in the midst of this seriousness, sedateness and gravity, there is often a *joy unspeakable, and full of glory:* However, it is certain, such a temper excludes frothiness and levity, and will ordinarily form the converse, deportment, and even countenance into a decent gravity. It is said of Bishop *Leighton*, that those who knew him most and longest, declared, that in a course of many years acquaintance, they scarce ever saw him once out of that deeply serious frame, in which they themselves wished to be found in their last minutes: This was extraordinary; but other Christians, according to the degree of their humility and contrition, know something of the like temper.

It shows itself in a weariness of this world, as a state of so much vanity; such low attainments, such great and frequent disappointments in the best pursuits: Where there is a constant warfare, and yet comparatively little victory and success, ardent breathings after God and heaven, and yet a clog, a dead weight at the foot drawing down the aspiring soul. This, whilst it humbles, inflames the desire, and makes the Christian groan for deliverance, *Rom.* vii. 24.

Bishop *Leighton.* "*I think I have given up," saith one, "with

" the contemptible desires and designs of this " present world; and must have either some- " thing beyond them all, or nothing at all: And " though this base clod of earth still depresses " me, I am glad that because it does so, I loath " and despise it." And in another letter, " I " find daily more and more reason without me, " and within me yet much more, to pant and " long to be gone: *Hei, hei mihi, quia prolonga-* " *tus est incolatus meus.* I am grown exceeding " restive as to writing and to speaking, yea, " almost to thinking, when I think what doth " it do, and withal how cloudy our clearest " thoughts are; but I think again, what other " can we do, till the day break, and the sha- " dows flee away: As one that lieth awake in " the night must be thinking; and one thought " that will likely oftenest return, when by all " the other he finds little relief, is when will it " be * day." O! when, when will it be day,

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* I have taken liberty to insert several passages from the letters of this great and divine man; most of them are pertinent to my purpose, and all of them breathe an uncommon spirit of devotion. Had more of his letters been preserved, they would have been a good supplement to the account Bishop *Burnet* has given of him in his late history, and might have furnished materials for a narrative of a devout life, which would have been entertaining to many: But as these few fragments will not be sufficient for such a purpose, I thought fit to take this way to preserve them. The reader will excuse me if I add a few passages more, very much in the same strain with what I have already mentioned. The truly great man, it seems, thought himself neither fit to write nor speak, so profound was his humility; and therefore took care, as far as he could, that nothing of his should remain; but I am persuaded few thought so besides himself; but rather will think it pity that any thing he spoke or wrote should be lost. " I

says the humble contrite Christian, mourning under the darkness and coldness of present night?

" believe," says he to his correspondent, " you carry about " you every where that indifferency to external events, and " that absolute confidence in the Supreme Hand that orders " them, which is the great principle of peace and calmness of " mind, amidst the fluctuation of human affairs." And in another letter, when he was deliberating about accepting a bishopric, as I conjecture, he thus writes: " One comfort I " have, that in what is pressed on me, there is the least of my " own choice, yea, on the contrary, the strongest aversion " that ever I had in any thing in all my life. The truth is, I " am yet importuning and struggling for a liberation, and " look upward for it; but whatever be the issue, I look be- " yond it, and this weary wretched life, through which the " Hand I have resigned to, I trust, will lead me, in paths of his " own choosing, and so I may please him I am satisfied. " This word, I will add, that as there has been nothing of my " choice in the thing, so I undergo it, if it must be, as a morti- " fication, and that greater than a cell and hair-cloth: and " whether any will believe me or not, I am not careful." He adds, on another occasion, " Your love of devotion and holi- " ness, I wholly agree with, and do really prefer the study of " it to all other studies; yea, I desire humbly to bless his " name, and kiss his gracious hand, that hath delivered me " from the painful pursuit of what we call learning, and from " the foolish pleasure of venting any little of it that I have I " write it on my books, and wish it engraven on my heart, Οὐκ ἔκρινα τοῦ εἰδέναι, &c. *I determined to know nothing, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*" Another of his letters runs thus; " Some days ago I received some lines from you, and " they were very welcome; for I know no better news can " come from any corner of the earth, than of a soul attempt- " ing to overcome the world and its own flesh, and in any de- " gree prevailing, and resolving still onwards. All the pre- " jecis and conquests in the world are not to be named with " it. O! what a weariness it is to live amongst men, and " find so few men; and amongst Christians, and find so few " Christians; so much talk and so little action; religion " turned almost to a tune and air of words; and amidst all " our pretty discourses pusillanimous and base, and so easily

O my soul! study and pray for more of this divine temper; a humility and abasement that answers the lowness and meanness of thy state. I desire to remember what once I was, *when a child of wrath, a vessel fitted for destruction:* I desire to retain a constant sense of what I still am, a mass of folly, impurity and sin; to be proud of such a heart, or *with such a heart*, is shameful stupidity. I desire to remember my more remarkable failings and follies, particularly in such a scene of life, and at such a time when —— how often have I acted a part, more worthy a brute than a man: For instance, —— O wretch! so ignorant and foolish was I, I was a beast before thee; but though I have been exceeding vile, God has been exceeding gracious: How kind, how tender the course of his providence towards me? How many, how great

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" dragged into the mire; self and flesh, pride and passion do-
" mineering, while we speak of being in Christ and clothed
" with him, and believe it, because we speak it so often, and
" so confidently. Well, I know you are not willing to be thus
" gulled; and having some glances of the beauty of holiness,
" aim no lower than perfection, which in the end we hope to
" attain: And in the mean while, the smallest advances to-
" wards it are more worth than crowns and sceptres. I believe
" you often think on those words of the blessed champion
" *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 24, 25, *&c.* There is a noble guest within
" us. O! let all our business be to entertain him honourably,
" and to live in celestial love within; that will make all things
" without very contemptible in our eyes. I should rave on,
" did I not stop myself, it falling out well too for that, to be
" hard upon the post hour, before I thought of writing:
" Therefore good-night is all I add; for whatsoever hour it
" comes to your hand, I believe you are as sensible as I, that
" it is still night; but the comfort is, it is drawing towards
" that bright morning that shall make amends.

" Your weary Fellow-Pilgrim," &c.

his salvations? Hell was my due, and had been my portion, had he not rescued me. O my God! what shall I render? In heaven I shall praise thee! I shall cast down my crown before the throne, saying, thou art worthy, not I. *Grace*, *grace* will be my song for ever there; and if there be one choir of saints employed in notes of greater abasement than the rest, surely I shall take my place among them. O! may I arrive safe out of this tribulation, and wash my garments in the blood of the Lamb. In the mean time make me humble, and take thy own wise methods with me to keep me so; *I would live and die repenting*, only grant me thy countenance and favour: Thou hast said to this man thou wilt look, even to him *that is poor, and of a contrite spirit; be it unto thy servant according to thy word.*

CHRIST *the* CHRISTIAN'S *Master.*

MATT. xxiii. 8. *One is your Master, even Christ.*

Eighteenth Specimen.

SUCH has been the veneration some have paid their teachers, that they resigned themselves absolutely to their dictates, and followed them, even with a slavery of understanding. It was the advice of the famous *Gamaliel*, that the ignorant should get themselves *Rabbi's*, that they might no longer doubt of any thing. In the school of *Pythagoras*, his authority was absolute, *ipse dixit*, the master hath said it, put an end to all farther debates among his disciples:

They acquiesced in his word as in an oracle*, and asked no farther questions.

* *Ælian vari. Hist.* Lib. IV. c. 17.

How much more reason has the Christian for this subjection to his great Master, who has all those qualifications that demand reverence and compliance. They were weak and fallible men, and often blundered in the dark: *He is a teacher come from God*, John iii. 2. fully acquainted with the Father's will, with the whole system of divine doctrines, and with every thing that concerns our salvation: He lay *in the bosom of the Father*, and *hath* revealed *him*, John i. 18. John vii. 16. is infallible in his doctrine; he received *not the Spirit by measure*, John iii. 34. a *faithful* messenger to the church, *Rev.* i. 5. clothed with the highest authority, *Matt.* xxviii. 18, 19, 20. *Matt.* xvii. 5. *John* vi. 27.

O my soul! resign to *the Master*: Thou mayest safely receive his dictates, and shalt not be misled by them; and this thy profession as a Christian, obliges thee to: Thou wast in thy baptism placed at his feet, in the condition of a student and learner in his doctrines and laws; and upon thy fidelity herein thy everlasting welfare dependeth. *Baptism saveth; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. or as some critics understand it, *the interrogation, the question* of a *good conscience*. " It may, I suppose, " more regularly be rendered," says Dr.* *Hammond*, " the question, or address of a good con- " science to GOd; when the true penitent be- " liever comes to him as to the oracle, to in- " quire of him for the whole future life, with " a *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Or, " *Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal* " *life?* applying himself to God for his direc-

* On *Rom.* x. 20.

" tion of all his future actions, and that with a " sincere, upright conscience, resolving firmly " to do what is there required of him; which " resolution of universal, sincere obedience is " that, which is here set opposite to the washing " of the flesh, and rinsing away the sullage of it " with water, which is but the ceremony that " signified that other, and was not to be thought " to avail any, but those who performed what " was signified by it; any more than the cir- " cumcision of a *Jew* without the inward pu- " rity." As I am baptized into Christ, and in his name, I have solemnly taken him for my teacher, master, and Lord, and put myself under his government; and so far only as I am subject to him, and follow him, I am a Christian: Resign, O my soul! to his conduct without reserve; and implicit obedience here is thy duty, thy honour and safety.

Resolve therefore to own him *as thy Master:* One is your master, even Christ. Do not, under a pretence of having no master on earth, neglect also the Master in heaven; and so render thyself lawless, having no rule but thy own will, humour, or lust.

Own him as thy *only Master; hear ye him*, Matt. xvii. 5. him, and him alone; none in opposition to him, or in neglect of him. The office of other teachers is to help me to understand the doctrines of my Master, but not to dictate to me in his stead: *He is the author and finisher of our faith*, Heb. xii. 2. His authority must make and bound our creeds; and therefore we are to look unto him, look off others unto him, as the word may signify, *i. e.* when they would set up an authority of their own.

Own him as thy master *in all things*. Though thou mayest not fully understand some of his doctrines; as how the three persons in the blessed Trinity are distinguished, and how united: Mayest not understand the full mystery of the person of Christ, the manner, nor all the ends of the incarnation, the precise nature of the resurrection-body, &c. *ipse dixit*, he hath revealed these things, and the authority of the teacher is sufficient to determine thy faith; he hath said it, acquiesce therein without cavilling; only do not pretend to be wise above what is written, nor to know and believe farther than he has revealed; embrace all his doctrines and institutions, his sacraments, the ministry he has appointed for the service of his church: As he has given *pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*, Eph. iv. 11, 12. These I would thankfully receive and be subject to, in obedience to him, whilst they act in his name, and pursue the great ends of their office; nor indeed can I truly call him master, if I neglect any of his appointments, or despise his officers or servants. Some that seem to have no business with the church of Christ, with the ordinances and ministers of Christ, yet factiously and vainly pretend they are of Christ, 1 *Cor.* i. 12. submit to him in all his prescriptions and laws. The Bible is the Christian's institutes; the New Testament particularly, his book of lessons. Endeavour, O my soul! to learn these, all of them, and more perfectly; and as they refer to practice, and are designed to govern heart and life, study and apply them for that purpose; bring thy thoughts, affections, desires, thy

words and actions, civil and religious, to the measure and standard of the gospel, submitting them to the correction thereof, 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. A text of scripture, importing this or that duty, or standing against this or that practice, should be of the same authority with a Christian, as a statute of the realm with a lawyer, and be pleaded by Christians with one another, with like authority.

O my God! grant me the true Christian temper; influence my mind to the regard, reverence, absolute submission and subjection that is due to my great master; may his word be reason enough for my faith and practice; may his will restrain, controul and govern me in all things. I would deny myself, because *ipse dixit*, he hath enjoined it; crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts; cut off the right hand, pluck out the right eye, because *ipse dixit*, he has made this my duty, and declared it necessary to my salvation: I would be humble, meek, lowly, live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; love my enemies, bless them that curse me, do good to them that hate me, and pray for them that despitefully use me, because *ipse dixit*, this is the doctrine and law of my great master. O! for a heart more filled with love and loyalty to him: Help me, Lord, to sit at his feet, receiving his commands here, and waiting for his salvation hereafter.

Of resolute VIRTUE.

1 COR. xv. 58. *Be ye unmoveable in the work of the Lord.*

THE great care and business of a Christian is to approve himself to God; and when this governs all his actions, influences all his designs, especially such as are of most importance, and directs all his motions and steps; when having fixed this as his end, he holds on in a steady course with his eye upon it, or does not warp or turn aside; he then acts like himself, becoming his character and profession. Thus it was with the apostle, *Acts* xx. 24. *Acts* xxiv. 16. 2 *Cor.* v. 9. Lord, may this be my attainment! let nothing divert me from my duty; help me to hold on my way through all discouragements, and sacrifice every thing for a good conscience. *Nineteenth Specimen.*

In order to this it will be necessary, that I be well informed concerning my duty; if I be ignorant or doubting; have not proved what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; have no clear apprehensions of what is just, decent, and becoming me in every instance; but am weak in the faith, and a child in understanding, neither know Christian duty, nor Christian liberty; I shall be tossed too and fro with every wind of temptation, and must often stand still, look to the motions of others, and so become a captive to the humours, fancies, and follies of men.

I must be willing to undergo, not only the censure of the unthinking, heedless part of mankind, but sometimes of the more serious,

and even of my friends; and it may be, must stand alone in the way of my duty, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. In which case I would consider, that good men are not my rule, they are sometimes off their guard, are unsteady, weak, passionate and selfish: It is a poor argument, this is the opinion or practice of such and such, *and they are good men.* That may be true; and yet he that will often take measures from them, will frequently plunge himself in the dirt. When *Peter* was to be blamed, *Paul* thought it his duty to withstand him to the face; and had *Barnabas* done so too, he had not been carried away with his dissimulation, *Gal.* ii. 11. 13. Help me, O my God, to set myself on as strong a watch as possible here: If wise and good men come to me with a cloven foot, I would say, *get thee behind me, Satan.*

I must be mortified to applause, and maintain low thoughts, and a sort of a contempt of the opinions of others concerning me, *i. e.* in comparison of the testimony and approbation of God and my own conscience; must *seek the honour that cometh from God only*, John v. 44. esteeming it a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. The breath that endeavours to blast me, and that which extols me, both will shortly be stopped; and as neither can affect my future state, they should not divert me from my present duties. "He is not just that will not "be just without praise; but he is a righteous "man that does justice, when to do so is made "infamous: And he is a wise man who is de-"lighted with an *ill name* that is *well gotten.*" Sen. Ep. 113. O! may I always consider, that every man standeth or falleth to his own master, and accordingly keep my eye to my great

master's hand, constantly saying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*

I must get the world under feet, be crucified to the world, and the world to me; looking down upon present things with a generous contempt, as scarce worthy of a serious, solicitous thought, accounting no interest considerable or important, but what respects another world and state. O! may it be thus with me: I shall never be immoveable in the work of the Lord; steady and resolute in my mind, till this world is in a great measure deprived of the power of tempting me; and I am prepared to suffer the loss of all things, and count them but dung, that I may win Christ.

I must daily and often look up to heaven for help; not only invigorate and strengthen my resolutions by proper considerations and reflections, but wait on God for the renewing of my strength, by the supply of his Spirit.

I must live within view of eternity, look beyond this moment and inch of time, and consider all the affairs and interests of it as little, low, and nothing, compared with an immense eternity just ready to take place.

O my God! raise my mind to this divine pitch! as thou hast called me to thy kingdom and glory by Jesus Christ, make me perfect, settle, establish, strengthen me; help me to *add to my faith virtue*, to act with a suitable courage and firmness to the Christian profession; if afflictions and tribulations arise because of the word and my duty: Should I have trial of cruel mockings, moreover of bonds and imprisonments; suffer the scourge and strife of tongues; may I be able to say, *none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, so*

I may finish my course with joy: And as the good man did to the threatening empress, *nil nisi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but sin; fortify me both against the smiles and frowns of this world; *if sinners entice* may I *not consent;* if enemies threaten, and friends allure, may I not consent; but still look above all, beyond all, setting the Lord always before me, considering him as at my right hand *observing* me; may I find him there *assisting*, conducting and supporting me.

Of the Improvement of TIME.

Twentieth Specimen.

THE due improvement of time is a matter of the utmost consequence. I have many arguments to press upon me caution and care in this great point of religion. Time is short, uncertain, continually passing away, cannot be recalled; and which ought to have no small weight with me, time, or the space allowed me in this world, is my day of grace and trial: If I lose my time, I lose eternity; if I lose part of it, even that is an eternal loss, in the consequences of it; a day lost on earth is an exceeding loss, may I not say an age lost in heaven! As a man soweth, so shall he reap; *he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he that soweth plentifully, shall reap accordingly:* Now is my seed time, and opportunity of improvement for a future state; the more therefore I fill up my time with duty, as such work as relates to another world, the fuller harvest of joy and blessedness I shall have there. Help me, O my God! to believe this, and to live for eternity; so to redeem and husband my time,

that my review of it at death, and my account of it after death, may be with joy, and not with grief, for that will be unprofitable for me.

In order to this I would propose to myself the following expedients and helps. (1stly.) I would endeavour to get my mind possessed and affected with a just sense of the narrow bounds and short limits of my life, and of that time may be properly reckoned to life: And here some such computation as this may not be impertinent. I will allow threescore and ten years for the life of man, it may be more, or it may be less, but that is the common period; if any survive it, they can scarce be said to live, but languish and die, sinking under the burdens of decaying nature: Out of this sum I must make a deduction for infancy and childhood, which cannot be well less than sixteen years: Few comparatively begin to live to any good purpose before that age, and most not till long after; and this will reduce the threescore and ten to fifty-four. Again, one third of that must be allowed for sleep, in which all action and life, is, as it were, suspended, which sinks to thirty-six: And of this I am afraid most people will be found to trifle away a fourth part; that is, of the sixteen hours which remain for action or life every day, not above twelve of them are employed in the proper business of life; with some I know it is better, but with the generality not near so well; and this brings down the account to twenty-seven years, that is all the time that the aged person of seventy can, strictly speaking, be supposed to live, according to a modest computation; though he should be one of them that began early to improve his time, and has been constant in doing

it: And how much of my seventy years is already gone? How much of the twenty-seven, according to the deduction made, has been wasted by immoderate sleep, unnecessary visits, diversions, recreations, sauntering and idleness? And upon the whole, to what a narrow scanting is life reduced! Consider this, O my soul! and be awakened; be up, and doing; trifle no more; work whilst it is day. *Lord, teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom.*

2dly. I would endeavour to offer up, and consecrate all my time to God, and endeavour that it may be sacred to him. By this means I may extend the former calculation, retrieve the time that would otherwise be lost, and make all my *duration* properly *life*, whilst I eat and drink, sleep, trade, and do all *to the glory of God*, managing all according to the rules he hath set, aiming at him, and being solicitous to please him in all. Thus common actions will receive a religious stamp, and be a sort of worship to God. " * God hath not " only permitted us to serve the necessities of " our nature, but hath made them to become " parts of our duty; so that if we, by directing these actions to the glory of God, intend " them as instruments to continue our persons " in his service, he, by adopting them into " religion, may turn them into grace, and " accept our natural actions of religion. God " is pleased to esteem it for a part of his service, if we eat or drink, so it be done " temperately, and may best preserve our " health, (and with this higher and farther " view, that our health may enable our services towards him). And there is no one

* *Taylor's Holy Living, p. 3.*

" minute of our lives, after we are come to " the use of reason, but we are, or may be " doing the work of God, even then, when " we most of all serve ourselves." Teach me, O Lord, this divine art! May my natural actions and common business have *holiness to the Lord* upon them; and my whole time and life employed as a sacred, devoted thing.

3dly. I resolve to watch against such things as would rob me of my time; would take care particularly, that I do not waste it in bed by excessive, unnecessary sleep; would take care of my first thoughts and first minutes, that these be well employed; the loss of these is often of bad consequence. I would guard against idleness, living without suitable business; against slothfulness in business; against immoderate business and foreign business: I may lose my time and life, though I be busy, if that business be out of my proper calling, and the way and method of service providence has appointed me; would guard against unprofitable visits, diversions, pleasures, *&c.* spending no more of my time in these things than the end of them allows and requires.

4thly. I propose to divide the time of every day, allotting a fit proportion to the several businesses thereof. It was the practice of a pious Christian, to distribute his twenty-four hours into three parts, allowing one part, or eight hours for eating, drinking, company and diversions; another part for the work of his particular calling in the world; and another third part, or eight hours, for the special and immediate service of God and religion, *(viz.)* reading, meditation, prayer, *&c.* It is said of *Grotius*, who spent his days in an insatiable

pursuit of human learning, that when he lay on his death-bed, he wished himself in the stead of his devout neighbour above referred to, and at the same time passed a censure on his own life, crying out, *heu vitam perdidi operose nihil agendo;* I have wasted my life in laborious trifling. I would endeavour to act with caution in this matter; no one business ought to ingross all my time, nor encroach upon the just demands of another: And though the division I have mentioned may not suit me, nor would I be scrupulously nice in such matters, yet some care is due here; and the more exact and prudent I am in my rules, and steady in the pursuit of them, the better I shall improve my time. So many hours I would allow for sleeping, refreshment, diversion and company; so many for the duties of my calling; so many for devotion; that is, such a proportion to each, as upon a due consideration of my affairs and circumstances I find convenient; and I would always resolve to leave some time every day for the affairs of my soul and eternity, and not let the shop encroach on the closet, at least not keep me out of it.

5thly. I would endeavour, with the greatest diligence and care, to improve such portions of my time as are set apart for, and appropriated to the work of religion; as my daily hours of devotion, fast or thanksgiving days, and every Lord's-day. I would exclude the world wholly out of this time, and make the best use I can of it for another world. Lord, help me by thy grace.

6thly. I would be careful not to lose my more loose and leisure hours, in the intervals of business or solemn devotion; and accordingly

would set myself to save as much of the time as I can, intermixing something of religion, religious discourse, or at least religious thoughts with my company, diversions, &c. " Betwixt " the more stated employments, and more im- " portant occurrences of human life," says the " excellent Mr. *Boyle* *, " there usually happen " to be interposed certain intervals of time, " which though they are wont to be neg- " lected, as being singly, or within the com- " pass of one day, inconsiderable, yet in a " man's whole life amount to no contemptible " portion of it: Now these uncertain paren- " theses, if I may so call them, or interludes " that happen to come between the more so- " lemn passages, whether businesses or recre- " ations of life, are wont to be lost by most " men for want of a value for them, and even " by good men for want of skill to preserve " them: But as though grains of sand and " ashes be a part but of a despicable smallness, " and very easy and liable to be scattered and " blown away, yet the skilful artificer, by a " vehement fire, brings a number of these to " afford him that noble substance glass; by " whose help we may both see ourselves and " our blemishes lively represented, as in look- " ing glasses, and discern celestial objects, " as with telescopes, and with the sun beams " kindle disposed materials, as with burning " glasses: So when these little fragments or " parcels of time, which, if not carefully " looked to, would be dissipated and lost, " come to be managed by a skilful Christian, " and to be improved by the celestial fire of " devotion, they may be so ordered as to afford " us both looking glasses to dress our souls by,

* Occasional Reflect. *p.* 9.

" and perspectives to discover heavenly won-
" ders, and incentives to inflame our hearts
" with charity and zeal: And since goldsmiths
" and refiners are wont all the year long care-
" fully to save the very sweepings of their
" shops, because they may contain in them
" some filings or dust of those richer metals,
" gold and silver; I see not why a Christian
" may not be as careful not to lose the frag-
" ments, and lesser intervals of a thing, in-
" comparably more precious than any metal,
" *time;* especially when the improvement of
" them may not only redeem so many portions
" of our life, but turn them to pious uses, and
" particularly to the great advantage of devo-
" tion." O my soul! study this frugality and good husbandry; time is short; do not throw any of it away; *walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time;* fix thy rules; quicken thyself to the observation of them by a frequent and near view of eternity; often call thyself to an account for thy time; inquire how it passes, what loss thou sustained therein, and by what means; and contrive in the best manner thou canst, how to save it and improve it. Lord, be my guide and instructor herein; make me wise, to consider my latter end, and that *on this moment of time my eternity depends.*

Of the CHRISTIAN'S *Ambition.*

* *Twenty first Specimen.*

EVERY man has something of ambition, which is an intense desire of good, of farther and greater good; of rising and being in some respect or other better, more comfortable, more happy. And this is very different in different

sorts of persons, according to the different sense they have of things desirable and excellent, and their different notions of happiness. It is said of *Luther*, that *he knew no ambition but what concerned the service of God:* Most men's ambition is directed quite another way, and has nothing of God for the object; as how to raise or increase an estate; to aggrandize themselves and families; get preferments, titles, honours, and reputation amongst men; enrich posterity, *&c.* for which purpose they form projects, lay schemes, and are unwearied in the pursuit of them. We often see them sell their children's souls for a little grandeur, money, settlements, and such like advantages in the world: Instances of this kind are so common, that as most men seem to aim at nothing else, so they are ready to think none do; as if the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, was really all there was in the world, and all we have to mind in it. Thus blind and besotted are unthinking creatures; they are pursuing shadows and vanity, and according to their success applaud themselves, and are applauded by others: *Men will praise thee when thou dost well to thyself,* Psal. xlix. 18.

But the Christian ambition is of another kind, he has more noble divine views, has chosen another sort of happiness, and is breathing after higher, and more excellent things; as to *the world*, he is, in some measure, *crucified* to it, and it to him, *Gal.* vi. 14. And it is not possible he should be fond of such a *caput mortuum*, a blasted, dead thing, as the world is if it be really *crucified* to him. He is *transformed by the renewing of* his *mind*, Rom. xii. 2. his *af-*

fections are *set on things above*, Colos. iii. 2. and about these his ambition is employed. In general, it is his ambition to please God, and be accepted of him: This is the *one thing* his soul desires, and that he is resolved to seek after, all the days of his life; in comparison of which, all other things are cyphers, vanity, and nothing; particularly he is ambitious,

That he may obtain a more complete conquest over sinful passions, irregular desires and motions: That he may be able to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, cleansing himself from all filthiness both of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God; that all gross, fleshly desires, all the deeds of the body may be mortified; that pride, envy, malice, and such like filthiness of the Spirit may be wholly rooted out of his nature; all lofty imaginations cast down, and every thought brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ.

That he may have a divine ability for, and be ready to every good work; may be strengthened by the Spirit, *with might in the inward man;* have a furniture and disposition of mind for all the duties and services of religion; for the duties of his special office, and particular relations; for works of piety and charity, as occasion requires. In a word, that he may be fitted to do or suffer, to converse with God and man, according to the laws and rules of his sacred profession.

That he may always keep possession of himself, preserve a serenity, composure and calmness within, under any events; not to be elated by prosperity, or depressed by adversity; neither be ruffled by a frowning, or tickled by

a smiling world; but pass through every state of things with indifferency, bearing either reproach or applause with an undisturbed mind; with a sense of the divine hand in every thing, and the divine eye upon him, constantly observing his motions and frame. Christ was the same when the multitude hailed him, in the midst of their *Hosannas* and detractions; glorious attainment! could the Christian come up to it, he would triumph therein more than *Alexander* in all his spoils.

That he may live in a constant acknowledgment of God, and submission to him in all his providences; not only bearing, but adoring his hand in his dispensations, maintaining a holy complacency or well-pleasedness therein; "he "would consider," as one * expresses it, "that "God is the master of the scenes, that we must "not chuse which part we shall act; it concerns "us only to be careful, that we do it well; al- "ways saying, *If* † *this please God, let it be as* "*it is*: And we who pray that God's will may "be done on earth, as it is in heaven, must re- "member that the angels do whatsoever is com- "manded them, and go wherever they are sent, "and refuse no circumstances: And if their "employment be crossed by a higher decree, "they sit down in peace, and rejoice in the "event; as when the angel of *Judea* could not "prevail in behalf of the people committed to "his charge, because the angel of *Persia* op- "posed it; he only told the story at the com- "mand of God, and was as content, and wor- "shipped him with as great an extasy in his "proportion, as the prevailing spirit. Thus "should the Christian do, if he keep the sta-

* *Taylor*'s Holy Living, *p.* 105.

† Ει τοῦτο τῷ Θεῷ φίλον, τοῦτο γενέσθω.

Dan. x. 13.

" tion wherein God hath placed him; he will " never long for things without, but sit at home " feasting upon the divine providence." This is the mark the Christian's ambition levels at, that his will may in every thing go along with the divine will, when clearly manifested; not only submitting to it, in this or that providence, as what *must* be, but resting in it, and approving it, as what *is fit to be, and is best:* So that he may almost say as *Luther*, *fiat voluntas mea, mea quia tua*, let my will be done, as being wholly referred to, and included in thine.

That he may have his love enlarged and inflamed, towards God and towards man; a more extensive, catholic, divine charity; a heart to love enemies, to overlook and forgive injuries, and overcome evil with good.

That he may preserve a devout frame, and keep the fire of the altar always in; be glad when he is called to go to the house of God, and find an heart for worship, public or secret, and that as often as the time of it returns.

That he may taste the pleasures, and partake of the refreshments of worship; neither want the serious, solemn frame, nor miss the divine presence, but have lively intercourse with God therein; see his power and glory in his sanctuary, be satisfied with the fatness of his house, and drink of the rivers of his pleasure.

That his children and household after him (if he be a parent) may keep the way of the Lord, be found walking in the truth, that he may see Christ formed in them; see them partaking of the high honour and dignity of being genuine and useful members of the Christian church. O! how doth he travail in birth for this purpose!

beseeching the Lord night and day with tears: And how would he triumph in it, could he see the travail of his soul in this respect!

These, and the like, are the objects of the Christian's ambition: Whilst the men of this world are intent upon worldly good, upon rising higher, getting more; his ambition has a nobler game, and different reference, *viz.* that he may govern his spirit, overcome his corruptions, discharge his duties, guard his frame, and enjoy his God! if he can succeed in these things, all is well, nothing can then come amiss to him; let the world revile and reproach, friends forsake him, and relations grieve him, if heaven smile, and God lift up the light of his countenance upon him, this puts gladness into his heart, and gives him a triumph over all adversity.

Thus it is with Christians of eminency, of higher stature and attainment in religion. Though as long as they are in the world, the affairs of it will demand some of their attention; they cannot wholly overlook the cravings of the bodily appetites, nor must they neglect the offices of life, yet their chief concern is about the other world, and their way to it. The interests of that have their most solicitous, most delightful thoughts; and with some it may be the greatest number of their thoughts: Nay, even whilst they seem busy among inferior services here below, their mind is often aspiring, looking above them, and beyond them. It is a divine passage of the philosopher, and yet, no doubt verified in some: "As the rays of the "sun," says he, "touch the earth, and yet are "there from whence they are darted; so a "great and devout mind is familiarly conver-"sant here below, *sed hæret inter superos*, it is

" fixed on God, and the inhabitants of another " world ;" from whence he lets fall a look upon these lower things, not without contempt of them, they seem so little to him.

O my God ! regulate my affections, and direct them to their proper objects ; if my soul may but prosper and be in health, and my religious affairs succeed well, as to other things, more estate, honour, reputation, outward comforts, &c. I have nothing to say, my happiness dependeth not upon them ; they may be either good or bad, as they are used, as they fit me, or as I need them, or can bear them ; and therefore I leave them in a wiser hand than my own, either to give or deny, as he shall chuse for me : What thou wilt, and as thou wilt, only forsake me not ; grant me thy presence and favour, and it is enough. *Deus meus et omnia : Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee ?*

Of the Religious Education of CHILDREN.

Twenty-second Specimen.

FATAL are the mistakes men run into in this great and momentous affair, the education of their children. The common methods of education do not seem to have any thing of God and religion in them. O my soul ! be upon thy guard here. *I know Abraham*, says God, *that he will command his children and household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord*, Gen. xviii. 19. Let this be thy solicitous care, and constant, faithful endeavour. It is true, I cannot give them grace, and secure their religion ; but as God has appointed me my duty, and laid his commands upon me, he has encou-

raged my expectation of success. A religious education, if it be truly and *throughout* such, and do not fail in any necessary branches of it, is often, and it may be ordinarily followed with a blessing, and made effectual: *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. xxii. 5. Lord, help me to attend my duty and thy prescriptions, and leave the event in thy hand. In order to it, I would propose to myself the following rules.

1st. I purpose and resolve to be serious and solemn in devoting my children to God in baptism. A great many seem to make baptism only a proper time of giving names to their children, or a season of feasting and merriment, or at least matter of form and compliance with an established custom, leaving out what is most essential to the ordinance, the concern they have with God therein. When parents offer their children to baptism, they are solemnizing a family covenant as it were; that is, the common Christian covenant, as made with them and their family, owning their relation to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; endeavouring to insert, as I may say, the name of this or that child into God's covenant, and to continue the high privilege and honour of such a relation in their family. And how important a thing is this! and with how much seriousness should we go about it! O my soul! remember thy faults this day; be humbled for past remissness and neglects, and be more serious and devout in thy future transactions of this kind. I knew a family, all the branches of which seemed to have an early, and more than common sense of religion; for which a judicious and grave man gave this reason, that next to the special favour and grace of God, he

thought it owing to the religious solemnity and seriousness, with which the head of the family devoted his children to God in baptism.

2dly. I purpose and resolve to be early and constant in the proper methods of instruction; particularly to inculcate and labour to possess them with a conviction and sense of the worth and dignity of the soul, of the certainty of a future state of immortality, of the importance of eternal things, and set myself all I can to bring this world into a just neglect and contempt with them; to instil a high veneration for the holy scriptures, recommending and making the Bible their chief study and delight, if it may be. This has been the way of good people in all ages. *Timothy from a child knew the holy Scriptures*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. The *Jews* were commanded *diligently to teach* the words of the law to their children, *Deut.* vi. 7. and how defective soever they were in other things, their zeal in this particular was very commendable. *Josephus* tells us, their children were trained up in the knowledge of the law from their very infancy, and were so expert therein, that *they knew every thing as perfectly as their own names.* Nor were the primitive Christians less careful in this respect: The Bible, especially the New Testament, was their institutes, the grammar of their religion, in which their catechumens and children were grounded. St. *Jerome*, in one of his epistles, giving directions for the education of a young lady of a noble Christian family, advises, "That "as soon as she was capable, she should learn "the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*; next be "taught the four Gospels, and have them al- "ways in her hand; then get the *Acts* and "*Epistles* by heart, and then pass to the read-

" ing of the prophets." How little of this is there in the present discipline of most families! Music, dancing, play-books, with a collection of novels, light poetry, &c. These are looked upon as the great accomplishments of young persons, and mainly attended to in their education; which, no doubt, is one great cause of that degeneracy we so much complain of in the profession of the Christian religion. Consider, O my soul! that in baptism thou enterest thy children into the school of Christ, and layest thyself under obligations to teach them his doctrine; endeavour to do this with constancy and care? put *his* book into their hands, and help them to take out of it the great and important lessons it contains.

3dly. I purpose and resolve to watch and guard their manners, and apply myself in all the methods I can, to cure the maladies and distempers of their minds. I would constantly recommend to them all social and divine virtues, love to God and man, in all the branches of it, sobriety, modesty, humility, the government of their passions and appetites; diffidence of themselves, esteem and reverence of superiors, especially their parents, ministers, and instructors; justice, truth, and charity in their words; and when any symptoms of evil, any immoral, vicious inclinations begin to appear, I would set myself, with great solicitude, to suppress them and root them out; to which purpose, I would carefully watch over them, and observe every thing of this kind; I would note down their more remarkable miscarriages from time to time, put *them* upon doing the like, and not only give suitable admonitions and cautions, but direct to such texts of scripture where they may

see themselves corrected and censured: And to enforce all, would add the sanction of mine authority, *commanding* my children and household after me to keep the way of the Lord; encouraging them by proper rewards in well doing, and restraining by threats and punishments from the contrary, *Prov.* xix. 18. *Prov.* xiii. 24.

4thly. I purpose and resolve at fit times to address myself to them in a more solemn manner, treating with them about the affairs of their souls; warning them of the danger of such and such neglects, such and such practices and pursuits; recommending to them religion from all suitable topics: and particularly pressing them to a personal covenanting with God, especially at the Lord's table; for which purpose I would endeavour to afford them all proper helps.

5thly. I purpose and resolve to dispose of them in the world, to choose their callings, employments, and masters; their relations, husbands, and wives, so far as I can, and the whole state of their affairs, *with an entire reference and subserviency to the great ends of religion.* O! that I may not, as is too commonly the case, by carelessness and treachery in these instances, destroy what I have been building; and after I have devoted my children to God, and engaged to bring them up according to the rules and laws of the Christian discipline, sacrifice them to *mammon*, and barter away their souls for a little present advantage: What is this but to imitate those wretched idolaters the *prophet* speaks of, *Jer.* xxxii. 35. who *built high places to* Baal, *to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto* Moloch. Their souls, if not their bodies, hereby become a victim. O! may I never be guilty of this perfidiousness. I

profess to take God as my covenant God; I have given up my children to him in covenant; I lie to him, and am an hypocrite; unless I choose him as my portion and theirs, esteeming his loving-kindness better than life.

6thly. I purpose, and shall endeavour to enforce all my instructions by my example, and not to run down in practice what I recommend by precept; would take care whilst I inculcate to them the necessity of religion, and of minding another world, not to neglect it myself, and thereby destroy the efficacy of my own doctrine; would take care, while I talk to them of moderation, humility, self-denial, &c. not to live in the contrary vices myself, and indulge myself in practices I am constantly representing to them the danger of; so, while I talk to them of governing their passions, I give a loose to my own; and against reviling and backbiting others, I daily take a liberty of doing so before them; if while I talk to them of the duties of retirement, of diligence and constancy therein, I manifest I have no regard to these things myself; often read grave lectures of mortification and contempt of the world, and yet discover by my conduct, both of myself and them, that I have nothing so much at heart; this can have no other tendency but to undermine all my instructions, and make the young pupil despise them as words in course, and a sort of cant; or at least make him like myself, *an hypocrite, and vain pretender to religion.* Dread, O my soul! this trifling; if religion be necessary and good for others, it is good for thee; nor wilt thou ever teach to purpose, whilst an ill conscience and an ill example stare thee in the face. Parents should be able to say to their children, as

the *apostle* doth to the *Thessalonians; Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you*, 1 Thess. ii. 10. *Those things which ye have both learned, and received, add heard and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you*, Phil. iv. 9.

7thly. I purpose and resolve to look up to God, in frequent, fervent prayer, for his instruction, to accompany and crown mine. This must be my daily work; and I would often set some time apart for more solemn intercession and supplication in behalf of my children; laying before him, and enlarging upon their several cases, necessities and wants, and recommending them particularly to God; begging he would direct me in my methods of conduct towards them, and especially when I have any close reproof or admonition to give them; that he would assist me in that application, and bless it, prepare their hearts to receive it, make it suitable and effectual. The more we depend on God in this, and all the great affairs of religion, the more success we are like to have; he has often prospered, and owned such a dependence. *Ambrose* told *Monica*, the mother of *Austin*, who had been so importunate for his conversion, that *a son of so many prayers could not miscarry*: Not that prayer, though as fervent as *Monica*'s, is always successful; but it is often so; often a means of enriching and blessing a family, and sometimes has been answered in very glorious fruits, and proved the best inheritance to their children, after the pious supplicants have been laid in the dust.

Help me, O my God! with all suitable zeal and patience, to attend my duty in this parti-

cular of it; may I walk within my house with a perfect heart; not only instructing, but exhorting and charging *as a father his children, that they walk worthy of God*, 1 Thess. ii. 11, 12. Whilst so many are seeking great things for themselves and theirs in this world, I would seek great things of a more excellent and durable nature; whilst they project how to make a *man* of this or that child, as they express it, I would be solicitous to make every one of mine a Christian, and constantly pursue such measures as have the most direct tendency to that purpose. Lord, grant me the desire and travail of my soul herein, and I have nothing greater, nothing farther to ask!

Of glorifying GOD.

Twenty-third Specimen.

It is agreed, I think, among Christians, whatever end God may be said to have in making the world, and in all his works, that the great and ultimate end of man, and which he is to propose to himself as his end, is God himself, his honour and glory. This religion teacheth us; *whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31. But though this be allowed to be our end, and what we often talk of as such, it may be few, comparatively, have any distinct and just notion of the thing, *what it is to glorify God*. It is not certainly to add to his glory, to make him glorious, or more glorious than he is; this no creatures, neither men nor angels can do: But it is, in short, *to preserve and express a sense of his excellency*. We glorify God, when in our whole conduct and behaviour we shew an es-

teem of him, and regard to him, suitable to the dignity of his nature; as when we have those inward affections, and discover them upon all occasions, that are due to a being of such excellencies, and answer the several perfections we acknowledge in him: For instance,

We glorify his power when we own and celebrate it in all the displays thereof, in his works, both of creation and providence; when we rely on him for the performance of all he has promised, being persuaded he *can do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from him*, Job xlii. 2. Thus *Abraham* glorified the divine power, trusting it through such difficulties as a weak faith could not have surmounted; he *believed in hope against hope; considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of* Sarah's *womb. He staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God*, Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20. The three *Jewish* worthies glorified the divine power, when they set it against the threats of the haughty monarch, and in consideration of it despised all his terrors. *The God whom we serve*, say they, *is able to deliver us out of thy hand*, Dan. iii. 17. The Christian glorifieth it by the like trust, in all dangers and difficulties, particularly in his confident hope of a resurrection by the power of God, *Matt.* xxii. 29. Farther, we glorify his power, when we fear him more than all other beings, *Matt.* x. 28. When we reverence him as the great Sovereign and supreme Lord of all, *Matt.* vi. 13. and, in a word, when we expect all performances of power from him, and slight such objections as would discourage our faith and trust.

We glorify his wisdom, when we take notice of the manifestations of it in all his ways; when we maintain a veneration suitable to so great an excellency; when we implicitly acquiesce in his providences, even though we understand not the meaning and design of them; believing that all God doth is well done; that there can be no error in his administration; when accordingly we wait for, and resign to his conduct in all things.

We glorify his mercy when we make that our refuge under a sense of guilt, and believe it sufficient to pardon the greatest transgressions; and will do it, in the way, and according to the plan and scheme of the gospel covenant, *Psalm* li. 1.

We glorify his omniscience and immensity, when we set him always before us, and at our right hand; believe he seeth in secret; and accordingly are as busy in that part of religion, which is withdrawn from the view of men, and as devout in it, as if all was transacted upon the open theatre of the world, *Matt.* vi. 6. When a sense of his eye upon us, and his certain knowledge of the inward motions, thoughts, and intentions of the heart, restrain from those sins that have the temptation of privacy; when we dare not dissemble and act with disguise, because God knows it; dare not lie or conceal the truth when called to utter it, because, though we may pass undiscovered amongst men, yet we consider that all things are naked and open to his eyes. *My son*, says *Joshua* to *Achan*, *confess and give glory to the God of Israel, and tell me what thou hast done*, Josh. vii. 19. When we reverence his presence, at all times speaking, thinking, and acting in his fear.

We glorify his holiness and majesty, when we behave ourselves with suitable lowliness and self-abasement before him, *Gen.* xviii. 27. And like the seraphim cover our faces when we behold his, *Isai.* vi. 2. When a sense of his infinite purity and greatness deeply humbles us, lays us in the dust as vile and nothing.

We glorify him in his providences, when we reverence every dispensation; eye his hand, own his sovereignty, justice, wisdom, holiness, *&c.* therein; dutifully submit to his will, and whatever he appointed and doth, we fall at his foot and do obeisance.

We glorify him in his word and laws, when we esteem them according to their excellency, as holy, wise, just, and good; make them our study, meditation, and delight, our monitors and rule; subjecting ourselves to the authority of God therein, and that at all times, and in all things.

In short, we glorify him *as God*, as the most excellent being, when our greatest ambition, and constant endeavour is to love him, serve him, obey him, and, in our measure, to be like him; when we are solicitous to obtain his favour, esteeming his *loving-kindness better than life;* are more concerned to please him, and recommend ourselves to him, than about any other interest in the world; when we covet his presence, and triumph in it, and are willing not only to leave this world, but to go through death, any sort of death, for the joys of his presence.

This is to glorify God; we glorify him *inwardly*, when we have that esteem and reverence of God, fear, trust, love, *&c.* that the perfections and excellencies of his nature re-

quire: And we glorify him *outwardly*, and give others occasion to glorify him, when we shew our inward esteem, reverence, devotion, &c. in a course of action; speaking honourably of God on all occasions; publicly worshipping him, and with all becoming devotion; expressing a zeal for his name and honour; being ready to vindicate it at all times, as we are able; and in a word, acting in every instance as those who understand the perfection of their rule, the greatness and excellency of their Master, *and as seeing him that is invisible:* Hereby our *lights shine before men*, and we give them occasion, (seeing our good works, with what *decorum* and decency, with what reverence of God, &c. we act) to *glorify our Father that is in heaven.*

O my soul! let this be thy care, thy study and thy ambition: To honour God in thy thoughts, words and actions; to discover a due sense of his infinite excellencies, and to make a just representation of him to the world; give him the glory of every attribute, and constantly act under the influence of it; let his power deter thee from sin, encourage thee to thy duty in the midst of all difficulties and dangers: *Fear not him that can kill the body* only; let a sense of his perfections draw out all suitable graces; a sense of his constant presence compose thee to gravity and decency of behaviour: Endeavour thus to glorify God, make it the general end of thy life, and the end of thy particular actions: *Whether thou eatest or drinkest, or whatever thou dost, do all to the glory of God:* Give him the glory of all he has done for the world, for the church, for thyself: Acknowledge him in every thing, in thy enjoyments, comforts, attainments, and

works; let it be engraven on thy heart, *by the grace of God I am what I am.* This I have done by the good hand of my God upon me; it was his wisdom that directed me, his grace that supplied me, his strength that carried me through the service. When I can say this with a full conviction of my dependence on God's help, and with a due sense of his goodness therein, I understand the *gloria Deo*, (glory to God) which is too often paid him in a compliment, and there is something more than form in my ascription. O my soul! endeavour to fix thy attention right; make God thy all; his glory thy constant aim: Thou needest not exclude thy own interest, nor art thou required to do so; that is always in connexion with God's glory: He that truly honours God, will effectually serve his own interest and comfort, and secure his salvation. Lord, assist me in the choice of my end, and in the pursuit thereof; fill my mind with a sense of thy excellencies; and may I, in all my converse with thyself and with thy fellow-creatures, act as under thy eye and influence, walking worthy, and shewing forth the virtues of him that has called me; of whom, through whom, to whom are all things, *to whom be glory for ever and ever.*

And thus I have given some more examples for the assistance of intelligent and devout Christians. I have drawn them out to a greater length than I designed. It may be the subjects I have chosen will be less acceptable to some, and may be thought not so proper for Meditation; but my intention is to lay down the method and manner of Meditation; to which purpose any subjects may be suitable:

And indeed I have made choice of these, not only because I look upon them of importance in the Christian life; but because I apprehend them growing out of fashion, and almost obsolete among us. The strain of modern writings in divinity, and modern sermons, seems to run another way; and being myself convinced that there is a reality in these things, and that many of them are the truths *by which souls chiefly live* and prosper, and in which, particularly, devotion is eminently concerned, I found it no difficulty to risk my reputation, and expose myself to the censure of some critics, rather than neglect any part of the service, to serious persons, I proposed in this essay. I shall hasten through what remains on the head of Meditation, and only touch upon a few subjects *for occasional Meditation*, in a very transient way, with greater negligence of stile and method, and thereby make the specimen fitter for imitation.

SECT. X.

Some Specimens of Occasional Meditation.

On the Reverence due in God's Worship.

SATURDAY NIGHT, SEVEN O'CLOCK.

I AM by the good hand of my God upon me brought near the close of another week, and have a prospect of another sabbath. Among

the duties that lie before me the ensuing day, those that concern the public worship, are not the least considerable. It was, I presume, one great end, if not the chief end of God, in the institution of a sabbath, or day of sacred rest, and for which it is continued in the church, that men might meet together, openly acknowledge God, pay homage to him, and converse with him in the solemnities of worship; and upon the discharge of this duty in a right manner, I reckon the sanctification of the sabbath, and the comfort of it very much dependeth.

Among other defects with reference hereto, which I have to accuse myself of, one is want of due reverence in the house and worship of God. I have not enough considered, that when I come into the house of God, the place of public worship, I am in his more special, immediate, solemn presence; and consequently that a more than common reverence is due from me. O my God! forgive past forgetfulness and neglects, and help me in my future conduct. Thou art every where present, filling heaven and earth; but here I may expect a more special presence. O! that I had a greater sense of it: Help me here to set thee always before me; and when I enter into thy courts, to behave myself as one under deep impressions of thy eye and presence, saying as the devout patriarch, *how dreadful* (or venerable) *is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*, Gen. xxviii. 17.

It was one of the precepts and rules God gave his ancient people, the *Jews*, that they should *reverence his sanctuary*, Lev. xix. 30.

There was, no doubt, a peculiar holiness in that place, and a peculiar reverence due to it, founded on reasons peculiar to that dispensation: Its very name imports holiness and sanctity. It was a divine structure, a building of God. He drew the model of it, *Exod.* xxvi. 30. It had a solemn consecration, by divine appointment, *Exod.* xl. 10. It was distinguished and honoured by the *Shechinah*, the sensible glorious presence of God, *Exod.* xxv. 8. And as God took possession of it, and sanctified it by his extraordinary presence, so from thence he manifested himself to his people, and often in a peculiar sensible manner, *Exod.* xxv. 22. xxxiv. 35. *Levit.* i. 1. These things gave a glory to that place of worship, made it a *sanctuary*, and called for special reverence: Accordingly sundry laws and rules were prescribed them, relating to that reverence, which I shall not at present meddle with.

It is certain there is now under the gospel *no such sanctuary*, or holy place. It was the *Shechinah* eminently that distinguished that place heretofore, and rendered it holy. Thus *Sinai* and *Sion* were called holy, because the *Shechinah* or glory of the Lord appeared in them in so illustrious a manner; and hence the mount of transfiguration is called the *holy mount*, 2 *Pet.* i. 18. because of the excellent glory there manifested, v. 17. But this holiness was purely *relative*, owing to the hallowing, sanctifying, extraordinary presence of God, and ceased whenever that was withdrawn. *Shiloh* was no longer holy, when the ark and tabernacle and *Shechinah* were removed from it. *Jerusalem* was once the holy city, but now is not so, because God has forsaken it. It is observable,

that when the *Shechinah* had at any time removed from the *sanctuary*, and left the most holy place, as it often did, particularly to direct the children of *Israel* in their marches, it was no longer esteemed *most holy;* and therefore not only *Aaron*, but his sons, the common priests, might come into it, *Numb.* iv. 5. So that I think it certain there can remain with us no such thing, properly speaking, as *a sanctuary* or holy place, unless we can prove a *Shechinah* in them. We may consecrate them by forms and rites of religion, and invocate the divine presence; may call them holy, but can never make them holy in the same sense as the Jewish tabernacle and temple were holy: Unless by some means or other, we can introduce a sensible display of the divinity into them; and therefore we find places of worship under the gospel were chosen without distinction, and without any pretence of holiness. So our *Saviour* told us it should be, *John* iv. 20, 21. 23. And so we find it was: *Christ* preached in synagogues, *Mat.* xiii. 54. *Mark* vi. 2. On a mountain, *Mat.* v. 1. By the seaside, *Mark* iv. 1. In a ship, *Mat.* xiii. 2. In an house, *Mark* ii. 1, 2. And thus did the apostles, *Acts* i. 13. ii. 46. v. 42. xviii. 7. 11. xxviii. 30, 31. There was *but one* particular place which heretofore God chose to put his name in, and to which their sacrifices and offerings were to be brought; but under the gospel incense is to be offered *in every place*, Mal. i. 11.

But though places of worship are not now holy, as under the Jewish dispensation the tabernacle and temple were, yet undoubtedly there is a reverence due to them, or at least

in him. They may still be called *the house of God*, and ought to be esteemed the places of his special presence. The Jewish sanctuary was frequently termed *the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, or meeting, not from the people's meeting together in it, rather because there GOD met with them. Our places of worship are still tabernacles of *meeting;* places in which we professedly go to meet with God, and more solemnly approach him. Where God is worshipped according to his own institution and appointment, he still records his name, and we may expect the accomplishment of what he has promised, that *he will come* to his worshippers *and bless them*, Exod. xx. 24. *Wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20. Whether that text refer *directly* to assemblies for worship or not, we need not, I think, exclude this sense in the interpretation. God is *now* present with his worshipping servants, as well as formerly, though there was something peculiar with respect to outward glory, and the like, in the manifestation of his presence then; and it may be that visible *Shechinah*, or glory, which filled the places of worship heretofore, may be considered as typical of a moral spiritual *Shechinah* and glory under the gospel; of that greater measure of light, life and comfort, that devout men are favoured with in gospel-worship.

It is of some weight in this matter, and a good argument of a special, eminent presence of God in places of public worship under the gospel, that the *angels* are represented as waiting, and giving their attendance therein. That celebrated critic, Mr. *Joseph Mede*, thinks that when God is said to be in one place more than

another, it is to be understood of his retinue or train. "The king," saith he, "is there where "his court and retinue is; so the Lord of "Hosts is there specially present, where the "heavenly guards, the blessed angels, keep "their station and rendezvous." And he endeavours to prove that all the appearances of the divine Majesty in scripture are described by that retinue: And indeed the *Shechinah* or glory of God consisted, as many think, of the divine Majesty with angels ministering to him, making up his retinue, and executing his commands. There were ministers and tokens of his presence, and hence we find by God's appointment *cherubims* set up in the holy place, overspreading and covering the ark, called by the apostle *cherubims of glory*, Heb. ix. 5. (*i. e.*) symbols of the divine glorious presence. The angels were eminently present in God's temple and sanctuary of old, as a signification of the divine presence there; and the apostle intimates that they are still present in Christian assemblies and places of public worship under the gospel, 1 *Cor.* xi. 10. where he is admonishing to behave with decency and reverence in such places, *because of the angels*. Angels are present, as spectators, and it may be for other purposes, with Christians in their worship: Hence *Chrysostom* calls the church or place of public worship, *the place of angels, of arch-angels, and palace of God*.

O my soul! reflect on this matter, and learn to reverence God's sanctuary. Look upon the place of worship as the place of God's special, solemn presence, and let the consideration of that compose thee into a grave, decent, reverend behaviour: Endeavour for a heart, temper

and frame that becomes one, who is so often conversant with God, a being of sovereign majesty and greatness, infinite purity and holiness. Particularly,

I would resolve and endeavour to maintain holiness of manners and purity of heart. Under the law strict orders were given not to approach God whilst under any defilement, and such as presumed to do so, were to be cut off, *Lev.* vii. 20. God dwelt among that people, and out of reverence to his presence they were obliged to the utmost caution and circumspection in their whole conduct. Their eating, drinking, all their converse was under the regulation of the divine law. O! my soul, attend to this: Thou worshippest an holy God, therefore study to be holy. If thou regardest iniquity in thy heart, and allowest thyself in any way of wickedness and defilement, God will not hear thy prayer, *Psal.* lxvi. 18. Thy *sacrifices are an abomination to him*, Prov. xv. 8. Thou dost but affront him when thou appearest in his presence. Take care therefore to *wash thy hands in innocency, and so compass his altar about*, Psal. xxvi. 6.

I would resolve and endeavour to get my mind filled with a sense of God, and of his special presence, *when I am going to his house and worship;* and when I enter his house, would endeavour to meet him there, directing my mind and thoughts to him, looking up for his presence, and begging his help.

I would endeavour to behave myself with a becoming awe and reverence whilst in worship, attending diligently and devoutly to the work I am about, and at the same time keep my eye fixed on God; watching against all indecency and rudeness in the presence of the divine Ma-

jesty and his holy angels, governing my outward deportment suitable to such a presence; guarding against whatever might be offensive and inconsistent with the reverence required, as laughing, gazing about, lolling, sleeping, &c. And especially I would guard my thoughts and affections; as knowing that the God I am worshipping, *searcheth the heart and trieth the reins.* Lord assist me by thy grace, teach me the true rule of thy worship: May I look well to my feet, (my affections) when I go to the house of God, and may I look well to them while there: Fill me with the *Shechinah* of thy Spirit, and constantly favour me with thy presence: May I see thy power and thy glory in thy sanctuary; then shall my soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.

Preparation for the Lord's Day.

SATURDAY NIGHT SEVEN O'CLOCK.

Specimen II. I HAVE been brought thus far through another week: I feel much occasion for thankfulness, not only that God has continued the usual course of his kind providence, but for some special favours and mercies, which, as I desire to bless God for, so I would take some notice of them in my diary. O! may I not be formal in such things, but record the loving kindnesses of God with all suitable gratitude and devotion! As I have matter of praise before me, so matter of complaint against myself; much reason to be humbled for such infirmities, as I see still ac-

company me, and compass me about. O! when shall I be above and beyond these complaints? However, I have reason to bless God that things are no worse with me. In the main, this has been a comfortable week: I have not been wholly left to myself; left to fall either into great sins, or great sufferings. I have not lost all my time, nor quite neglected my duty, either to God or man; and I hope I may say I have had some hours of comfortable converse with God, particularly upon Thursday night, when——Lord, accept my acknowledgments of thy grace and goodness towards me, and of my miscarriages.

To-morrow is a day set apart by the appointment of God, for the special solemn work of religion, which I would now endeavour, in the best manner I can, to prepare myself for. Lord assist me therein! *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* I cannot understand what they mean that object against the morality of the sabbath, and are for laying it common; certainly they are not friends to themselves. I cannot but look upon it as a wise and merciful institution; not only a mark of God's sovereignty, but an instance of his kindness: Herein he hath joined our duty and happiness. Whatever others do, I am sure I need such pauses as these, in the pursuits of the world, and desire to be thankful that I am so frequently called off from the defiling distracting business of this earth, and to turn my face more directly towards heaven. O! for wisdom and grace to improve my sabbaths aright, that every sabbath might be a foretaste of my everlasting sabbath, and as one of heaven to me.

I purpose to-morrow to pursue the rules I have often heard recommended, and which I am convinced are just and reasonable, (and accordingly have prescribed them to myself) concerning my behaviour in the several duties of the Lord's day, secret, private and public. I would often revise them, and always attend to them: And as I have abundant reason to be sensible of my omissions, neglect of rules, mismanagement of sacred work, it becomes me to remember my fault this day; and as I would censure myself, so I would take the present occasion to renew my resolutions, particularly in the following instances:

I would take care to lose none of the sacred time of the Lord's day, but diligently employ the whole of it in public or secret duties; in works of piety or mercy, so far as the state and strength of the body will admit, and leave no intervals and parentheses of religious exercises and services, but such as may fit me to return to them with more advantage.

I would make a great account of solemn worship; and though I would be cautious, I do not aim too high, lest disappointments turn to my discouragement; yet I would always have designs and views suitable to such weighty employment, as I am to be in through the day, especially when engaged in worship. It is something great and important I am about, when in the special and immediate presence of God, conversing and transacting with him concerning the affairs of my soul and eternity: Accordingly it becomes me to be solicitous about success herein, and be in good earnest in all my work.

I would resolve and endeavour to prepare myself duly for the work of every sabbath, and particularly of the next; would be early upon my knees, endeavouring to get my heart warmed in secret devotion; to awaken my faculties, fix my attention, bespeak the presence of God with me, beg a blessing upon the several ordinances of the day; upon the minister or ministers I may hear, whom I would never fail affectionately to recommend to God, desiring they may be helped in delivering their message, and that a suitable word may be directed to my heart.

I would be especially careful to join in the devotion of the congregation in the prayers and praises that are offered up. Alas! how much have I failed in this respect? How often do I withdraw my attention, (my eyes and thoughts rambling about) bearing no part in the worship? I purpose henceforth, to-morrow particularly, to watch against this trifling, and to keep close to the work in hand, going along with the minister in all his petitions, not only hearing them, but setting my hearty Amen to them; making them my own, and unite in sending them up to heaven. Lord, assist me by thy grace!

I purpose, and shall endeavour to make some advantage by every sermon I hear. This may be done, even though it may be none of the best, if it be not altogether ramble and impertinence; in which case, I confess, it is not easy to keep up attention, much less employ devotion; but if it be grave, solid and judicious, notwithstanding it have nothing extraordinary and new, I may improve by it; as in the exercise of grace, relishing known truths, feeding

upon them, delighting in them, &c. When I go to hear the word of God, I do not always propose new light, and further instruction; much less should I propose the entertainment of curiosity, but rather the warming my heart, and having my mind stirred up by way of remembrance: Accordingly I would chiefly value such preaching that has most of this tendency; that is fitted to rouse the conscience, and better the heart, rather than tickle the ear. I have been pleased with some thoughts of the *truly honourable Mr. Boyle*, in one of his occasional reflections; that upon the sight of a looking-glass, with a rich frame. He observes, "That "though the curious frame does as well please "as attract the eye, yet it does not represent "the image of the beholder's face; so the fine "expressions many applaud in sermons, have "no peculiar virtue in them, have no power "like a good looking-glass, to acquaint the be-"holder with the true image of his own com-"plexion and features; and often when a glass "has a rich and gaudy frame, children's eyes "are so entertained and amused with it, that "they are regardless of any thing else, and "neglect to consult the usefuller part, whose "office it is to discover to them themselves: "So when there is too much of rhetoric in a "sermon, many that should not be children, "have their attention not only so attracted, "but so detained by that, that they are diverted "from regarding the more instructive part of "the discourse; and the more witty and criti-"cal sort of auditors are so much more accus-"tomed to judge of sermons, than to judge of "themselves by them, that they deal with "them, as if in this glass a man should only

" praise or discommend the embossed images " of the frame, without caring to make use of " the glass itself, to mend any thing he finds " out of order about him ; and it must be con- " fessed, though I grieve and blush it can be " truly so, that it is but too often as the scrip- " ture somewhere complains, *like people, like* " *priest ;* and that there is a sort of preachers " (for I am loath to call them divines) who ap- " pear more solicitous to make their expres- " sions, than their hearers good, and had much " rather hear their praises than their sighs ; and " that their auditors should rather admire their " good language, than follow their best coun- " sel : In a word, in such kind of sermons " there is little spoken either from the heart or " to the heart, the orator and the auditory " tacitly agreeing to deceive themselves ; and " the conversion of sinners being neither the " effect nor the aim of such florid, but unedi- " fying discourses. The business is translated " on both sides, as if the preacher thought he " had done his part when he has shewn his wit, " and the hearers thought they had done theirs, " when they have commended it." Consider, O my soul ! that devotion in hearing, and prac- tice afterwards, is the end of hearing. Attend to this at all times, and do not trifle in the house of God, and in the affairs of eternity.

I purpose to employ some time every Lord's day night, in reviewing what has passed in the day ; in censuring what has been amiss, work- ing upon my heart what I have heard, in suit- able confessions, petitions and praises, and espe- cially in the pleasing contemplations of the state above, where such work as I now blunder and stammer in, will be brought to its perfec-

tion; and sabbath-religion, particularly that more essential part of it, *gratitude and praise*, will be better understood by me. Lord! tune my heart more and more for thy work on earth: Fit me for thy day approaching: Make me glad with thy countenance; and after a few days attendance more in thy outer court, may I be admitted within the vail, and make my ascriptions with the rest of the saints, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.

SATURDAY NIGHT, SIX O'CLOCK, BEFORE THE SACRAMENT.

Specimen III. TO-MORROW is a very solemn day, *the great day of the feast;* as the *Jews* used to call the last day of one of their festivals. It is a sabbath day, and a sacrament day. I ought, I am sure, to make it a busy day; and O! that I may find it a good and comfortable day.

The circumstances of the present time naturally lead me to some reflections, and further resolutions. (1.) I desire to review the state of things with me. I thank God for the evidence I have of my sincerity in the Christian profession. I am not altogether at a loss and in the dark as to my state in general, and therefore have I not occasion to go through the whole process of examination, as sometimes prescribed in books. I cannot think this necessary for every Christian before every sacrament; he should rather live so as to be always fit for that solemn ordinance, was it to be part of every day's work, or every week's work, as

in the primitive church. I desire not to live a stranger to myself, but daily to observe my heart, frame and walk; often to revive it, and state accounts between God and my soul. I bless God that this has been my care, in some measure, and for the comfortable evidence I have of acceptance with him. O! that herein I may not be mistaken. *Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Notwithstanding it is not unreasonable, but what the occasion requires of me, to employ some time in examining things, and looking back on what has passed this week, this month, and since the last sacrament. How have I spent my time——How have I improved my sabbaths ——How have I managed my calling——How have I ruled my tongue——How have I governed affections, passions and appetites——How have I performed the duties of worship? Have I been constant, serious and devout therein? What victory have I gained over my infirmities, and particularly that which the last sacrament day I saw reason to confess with so much resentment, and that I had a special reference to in my sacramental vows, and in my other devotions at the Lord's table, and of which I have a note in my diary. O! my soul! inquire into these things, and accordingly now address thyself to God.

(2.) I would endeavour to trim my lamp, and get my heart into a solemn serious frame, that if the minister should be out of frame, as it sometimes happens to the best, I may supply that defect by the warmth and intenseness of my devotion; to which purpose I determine

this night to spend a fit proportion of time in suitable exercises of religion ; and to be as early to-morrow morning, as the state of my health and bodily spirits will allow, in my closet. Lord, grant me thy presence, and assist me by thy grace !

(3.) I would endeavour especially to preserve an holy rejoicing frame through the work of the next day, and particularly when at the Lord's table. How great a dignity and privilege is it to sit among the saints there, while men of a profane and worldly spirit neglect and despise these enjoyments ! I would glory and triumph in them. Lord ! I deserve not to eat the crumbs that fall from thy table, and behold ! I am entertained amongst thy children, have the covenant of thy grace sealed and confirmed to me, and receive an investiture in all the rich and transcendent privileges of it. Infinite grace ! I know not which to admire most, the love that made the feast, or that has made me a guest. O ! my soul, rejoice in the Lord : Though the fig-tree does not blossom, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation. And O ! that those woful infirmities that hang about me, were out of the way, that I could get more above them : However they need not hinder my gratitude and rejoicing ; I know they are not allowed. I am in pursuit of a conquest, and shortly the victory shall be complete. And in the mean time, I have in the ordinance before me, no small encouragement : The cup I there take, is the New Testament in the blood of Christ, *shed for remission of sins.* Lord ! I will set the sufferings of my Saviour against my sins. I am a sinner, but I will plead the mercy of thy nature, the grace of thy covenant, and

the blood of atonement, and desire with triumph again to lay my hand on the head of the great victim. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died*——.

(4.) I purpose and resolve upon a life of holy obedience and greater exactness therein; and in order to it, would now peruse my diary, observe how things have been with me, consider how at present they are, and contrive how they may be better for the future. Lord, help me by thy grace! Be with me in my future conduct! Grant me thy presence in the work of to-morrow at thy table, and in all the duties of the day. May I with freedom and cheerfulness go through the several services of it, and in all be accepted in the beloved.

The Pleasure of Worship in Prospect and Review.

SATURDAY NIGHT, SEVEN O'CLOCK.

I HAVE another Lord's day before me, and desire now to set myself to prepare for it. I have known some Christians, particularly one, who used to rejoice when in the circumstances I am now in, *viz.* taking leave of the world on Saturday night. He would meet and welcome the sabbath with a gladness and sort of triumph, and was used to part with it, and return to the world again on Monday morning with a sort of reluctancy. The like happy frame the psalmist manifestly discovers, *Psal.* cxxii. 1. *I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord;* which is also expressed, *Psal.* xlii. 1—4. *Psal.* lxiii. 1, 2, 3. *Psal.* lxxxiv. 1—4. And as he longed for the solemnities of God's house, Specimen IV.

and was delighted in them, so it is plain, he had a pleasure in the review of them : *A day in thy courts*, says he, *is better than a thousand*, Psal. lxxxiv. 10.

How many, alas ! are there, who are utterly strangers to such a temper ! Who have no value for a sabbath, nothing depending at such a time, that they reckon of moment and consequence, and who have no true concern and solicitude of mind about the transactions of it ! Custom brings them to the places of public worship : Some of them may vouchsafe a superficial attention, and now and then commend the sermon, especially if the preacher acts the orator ; but ordinarily their humour leads them to censure, and, it may be, despise both sermon and preacher : And as to the great and weighty concerns of the day, success in worship, sanctifying God in his house and ordinances, maintaining a devout frame of mind, intercourse with God, and the like, these are things they know nothing of, nor do they trouble themselves with.

And, O my soul ! what reason have I to complain here ! How little do I know of the devout frame, as this way expressed, *viewing and reviewing the sabbath with pleasure and delight !* Am I not sometimes ready to say, *What a weariness is it ?* when will the sabbath be gone ? Instead of triumphing in the work, am dull and heartless, and often gloomy and dejected at the close of it. Endeavour that this matter may be mended, and that thou mayest welcome the sabbath, delight in the services of it, and look back upon them when they are over, with complacency and rejoicing. O ! when shall it be thus with me, more thus, always thus ? To promote such an happy temper, several things are necessary.

It is necessary that I have an holy, sanctified heart, otherwise I can never sanctify God's day, nor delight in his work, but shall be *piscis in arido*, out of my element, when employed therein; nor is the first vital principle of grace in the bare essence or being of it sufficient; but some improvement and advance must be endeavoured, giving the soul a strong bias towards God and religion.

It is necessary I have some experience of the comforts of worship, of intercourse and converse with God in his house and ordinances; that I have, sometimes at least, tasted of these refined, sublime delights. The *psalmist* had seen the power and glory of God in his sanctuary; not only an external *Shechinah*, but a moral *Shechinah*, as I may call it; the glory of God's special presence, filling and refreshing his soul, satisfying him as with marrow and fatness; and hence he cries out, *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee*, Psal. lxiii. 1. He that has drank of the rivers of God's pleasure in his house, will find his mouth in some measure put out of taste with other things: And as without this experience the work of the sabbath, and particularly of public ordinances, will be dull and heavy, want its attractive excellencies, so it is not possible I should much desire it; if I have never found delight in it, I shall not find much longing after it.

It is necessary that I consider this frame and bent of mind (*a pleasure in the prospect and review of sabbath-work*), as a great and valuable attainment, and accordingly be solicitous about it, often and earnestly pray for it; and if I still find myself defective, set time apart for more

solemn prayer and fasting, with a special reference hereto. Lord, quicken my zeal in this particular!

It is necessary that I be diligent and attentive, and keep a strict watch over my heart and frame through the day; that I be mortified to the world, get it out of my thoughts and affections; that I be much in the angelic work of praise; that I set myself apart entirely for the great business of religion, and on this occasion especially be in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

O my God, assist me by thy grace herein! Grant me more abundant communications of thy Spirit; tune this poor dull heart for thy service; endear thy day and the work of it to my soul; that I may call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and be glad when they say unto me, *Let us go into the house of the Lord.*

LORD'S-DAY NIGHT, SEVEN O'CLOCK.

Specimen V. THIS day I heard a sermon from *Luke* xvi. 25. Abraham *said*, *Son*, *remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things*, *and likewise* Lazarus *evil things*, *but now he is comforted*, *and thou art tormented.*

After a fit introduction, and some remarks upon the parable in general, it was observed, that in the text which is part of *Abraham*'s answer to the rich man, we have (1.) The compellation or the name he gives him, *Son*, *Son*, *remember that*, &c. He doth not revile him, nor call him hard names, how wicked and unworthy soever he had been: Whence one observes, as

was suggested, how indecent and unbecoming it is for Christians to treat one another with terms of contempt and bitterness. The *angel* would not bring a railing accusation against the devil; and here *Abraham* calleth the rich sensualist *son*. Reproachful language never served a good cause, and very ill becomes the mouth of a good man. Learn, O my soul! some instruction from hence: I could not but think this a pertinent remark; pertinent to the case of others, to my own case often. Lord, help me to profit by it. (2.) We have also the different states and conditions of the persons concerned in the parable, both here and hereafter: One had *his good things here*, the other *his evil things here;* hereafter the one was *comforted*, the other *tormented*. (3.) An admonition to the rich man, to call to mind the former state of things, both with him and *Lazarus;* and this as one ground and reason of their different state hereafter, *Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*. He puts him in mind that he had already had the happiness he chose, and rested in, the good things he valued most; whereas pious *Lazarus* had lived in poverty, disgrace, and outward sorrow; and thereupon he appeals to him, as it were, concerning the equity of that distinction, that was *now* made between them: *Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented;* as if he had said, Is it not reasonable it should be so? *&c.*

Several things were observed from hence, and insisted upon, particularly (1.) That often bad men have a large measure of good things in this life, and good men a large measure of evil

things. This was explained and limited in several propositions: Some account was given of the good things of the one, and the evil things of the other, in the present life. (2.) It was observed, that it is but just, a distinction should be made in favour of good men hereafter, that the wicked who have received their good things in this life, should be tormented in the other life; and that good men, who have received their evil things here, should be comforted hereafter. The equity of this was argued; and from the whole the providence of God vindicated from a common objection, grounded upon the present prosperity of the wicked, and the sufferings of good men. Some advantages were taken notice of, that good men have at present: They have many spiritual good things with their outward evil things, and then infinite will be their advantage hereafter! Whilst the wicked are tormented, they shall be comforted. O my soul! endeavour a suitable improvement of what thou hast heard: Never more envy the prosperity of the wicked. This was urged upon thee, recollect what was offered: Their happiness is but a blaze and dream. It is a poor relief to the rich man in hell, that he once lived in pomp and pleasure. Cheerfully submit to such evil things, as by the providence of God may be thy lot and trial here. There is a great deal of wisdom, and even tenderness and love in the appointment of them, as was suggested: They will soon be over, and thou shalt be comforted. Help me, O my God! to bear thy discipline with a calm, cheerful mind, waiting for thy salvation: Direct me in the choice of an happiness: May I not have my portion in this life, my good things here! I leave the sumptuous fare, the purple

and fine linen to such as know nothing of better enjoyments; it is enough if I have thy supports in all the evil things through which I pass now, and be comforted hereafter.

LORD'S-DAY NIGHT, SEVEN O'CLOCK.

I THIS day heard a sermon upon *John* xii. 26. *If any man serve me, let him follow me.* Specimen VI.

After the division and explication of the words, as usual in sermons, the example of Christ was set before us for our imitation. It was premised, that he being an *extraordinary* person, his example must be supposed to have something *extraordinary* in it, and indeed was in sundry instances above our imitation. This was illustrated and shewn in several particulars; but though we cannot imitate him throughout, in many things we may and ought. Some things he did to confirm our faith, beget in us reverence of himself; as when he rebuked the winds and the seas, walked upon the water, opened the eyes of the blind by a touch, and raised the dead by a word; other things he did for our imitation, *leaving us an example that we should tread in his steps*, 1 Pet. ii. 21.

Several particulars were proposed, wherein we are to follow him, as (1.) in holiness. He was eminently holy, without the least taint or pollution: Holy in his birth, and in all the actions of his life; hence he is called the *holy child Jesus*, Acts iv. 27. *The holy one and the just*, Acts iii. 14. He was holy in his thoughts, words, affections, actions: Holy in all manner of conversation; none ever convinced him of sin, and herein we are to follow him, 1 Pet. ii.

21. (2.) We are to follow him in his early piety, *Luke* ii. 46. 52. (3.) In his filial obedience and dutiful regard to his parents, *Luke* ii. 51. *John* xix. 26, 27. (4.) In his devotion, particularly his prayerfulness, *Matt.* xiv. 23. *Mark* i. 35. *Luke* vi. 12. 21—44. *Heb.* v. 7. (5.) We are to follow him in his constancy, diligence, and zeal in the work of God, *John* ix. 4. *John* iv. 32. 34. (6.) In his steady regard to the glory of God in all he did, *John* viii. 50. vii. 18. xii. 27, 28. (7.) In his contempt of this world, the honours and all the enjoyment of it, *Matt.* iv. 1. 10. *Luke* ix. 58. x. 3. (8.) We are to follow him in his humility, patience, meekness, *&c.* *John* xiii. 5. 1 *Pet.* ii. 23. *Matt.* xi. 29. xxvi. 63. (9.) In his charitable, forgiving temper, even towards his worst enemies, *Luke* xxiii. 34. (10.) In his full resignation to the will of God, *Luke* xxii. 42. (11.) In his peaceable conduct and deportment in the world, *Matt.* xii. 19. xvii. 27. (12.) In his beneficence and readiness to do good, both to the souls and bodies of men, *Matt.* xv. 32. *Acts* x. 38. (13.) In his composure and evenness of mind under all occurrences. He could go through any bustle and hurry of business, and never be ruffled; hear the hosannas and applauses of some, and the rudest insults of others, without losing his temper. (14.) In the spirituality of his frame: He was always breathing something of God and heaven, improving every occasion to the purposes of religion; witness his parables and discourses with his disciples and others he conversed with. (15.) We are to follow him in his fervent desires after heaven, and the blessedness thereof, and the constant reference he had thereto, *Heb.* xii. 2. *John* xvii. 5.

The duty and reasonableness of following Christ was proved by several considerations; and as I am convinced of my obligations hereunto, I desire to act accordingly. Lord, help me by thy grace. These are indeed known truths, what I have often read in books, and heard from the pulpit, but notwithstanding that, I do not think myself the less concerned to attend them: And as I have endeavoured to recollect them as they have been this day set before me, I would endeavour to make the practice of them the great care and business of my life. A Christian is a follower of Christ, and the more exactly he follows him, the better Christian he is. We are predestinated and appointed to be conformed to and bear his image, *Rom.* viii. 29. And indeed in this conformity, in the several divine virtues and graces that have been mentioned, not only our present meetness for heaven consists, but heaven itself very much consists in it: *When he appears we shall be like him*, 1 John iii. 2. O my soul! frequently contemplate this beautiful, glorious example; often bring it into view, and set it before thee; examine and govern thy heart, frame, and actions by it. In any doubtful cases, or when under temptation, ask thyself how Christ would have acted in such circumstances, and act accordingly. Lord! impress my mind more deeply with the rules of thy word, and the example of my great Master. I bewail it, that I am so unlike him, that I have followed him no more closely: Transform me more and more by the renewing of my mind; bless the truths that I have heard this day; teach me to profit by them: May I in all things approve myself to thee in

well-doing, and may the same mind be in me that was also in Christ.

LORD'S-DAY NIGHT, SIX O'CLOCK.

Specimen VII. I HAVE passed so far through another sabbath; but, alas! how little improvement! how little converse have I had with God in his house and worship! How little acquainted am I with the true spirit of devotion! I heard a sermon from that text, *Psal.* xxxii. 10. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about;* in which the miseries of a vicious sinful life were displayed, such as respect the body and the soul, time and eternity; but how little was I affected! I am sure not suitably to the subject and the importance of the discourse; I would recover what I can of it now, and preach it over again to myself.

The truth is, I have trifled and been very much out of frame through the greatest part of this day. I was dull and inattentive at prayer; at least my attention was often dropped; and though it be not usual with me, it so happened to-day, that *I fell asleep* under the sermon, and this stupid, negligent frame I continued through the other part of the day, the afternoon: I slept several times during the sermon, and more than once at prayer. Wretch as I am: was this like a worshipper? Herein I affronted the great God, his attending angels, the minister that officiated, the whole congregation; deserted and slighted the devotion of it; grieved the serious and devout that observed me, set an ill

example to the careless, and lost my own part of the blessing. Have mercy upon me, O my God! I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Nor need I be very much at a loss to account for this woful miscarriage. I have of late lost something of my tenderness of conscience, warmth and zeal in religion. I have been more superficial in secret duties, and in general less serious in my course and walk than I used to be. I spent no time last night, in preparing for the sabbath, and begging a blessing upon the work of it. I trifled away some hours, after the necessary business of the day was over, in conversation and——with——I lay in bed this morning till it was almost time to go to public worship: And though according to custom I prayed, it was very short, and very cold, and indeed to no purpose. I went to the house of God in a careless light frame: talked all the way, as I went, about mere impertinences with ——When I came to the place of worship, I had no serious thoughts of God, of the awfulness of the presence I was in, and importance of the work I was about; never looked up to heaven for assistance, nor endeavoured to set myself on my guard: Horrid stupidity and non-attention! How often have I smarted for such folly, and yet not reclaimed! *Bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.* Lord, I would take shame to myself, and humble myself before thee; rouse my resolutions of more watchfulness and care for the future: For thy name sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity for it is great.

SATURDAY NIGHT, SIX O'CLOCK.

Specimen VIII. *Bishop Leighton's Preface before one of his Sermons*, p. 39.

"THERE is no exercise so delightful to those "that are truly godly, as the solemn worship "of God, if they find his powerful and sensible "presence in it; and indeed there is nothing "on earth more like to heaven, than that is. "But when he withdraws himself, and with-"holds the influence and breathings of his Spi-"rit in his service, then good souls find nothing "more lifeless and uncomfortable. But there "is this difference, even at such a time, be-"twixt them and those that have no spiritual "life in them at all, that they find and are sen-"sible of this difference, whereas the other "know not what it means. And for the most "part, the greatest number of those that meet "together with a profession to worship God, "yet are such as do not understand this differ-"ence. Custom and formality draws many to "the ordinary places of public worship, and "fills too much of the room. And sometimes "novelty and curiosity, to places not ordinary, "has a large share. But how few are there "that come on purpose to meet with God in "his worship, and to find his power in it, "strengthening their weak faith, and weaken-"ing their strong corruptions; affording them "provision of spiritual strength and comfort "against times of trial; and in a word, ad-"vancing them some steps forward in their "journey towards heaven, where perfection and "happiness dwell! Certainly these sweet ef-"forts are to be found in these ordinances, if we "would look after them. Let it grieve us then, "that we have so often lost our labour in the

" worship of God through our own neglect, " and intreat the Lord that at this time he " would not send us empty away; for how " weak soever the means be, if he be put to " his strength, the work shall be done, in some " measure, to his glory and our edification."

Lord! may I find thy powerful sensible presence in thy house and ordinances; in prayer, hearing, and every part of divine worship. How often, alas! do I want it? This comfort however I have, that I know when I want it, find and feel the want; know when thou art present and when thou art absent. I bless thee I am not wholly insensible of these things, and unconcerned about them; but that sometimes I have met with thee in the solemnities of thy service.

Lord! afford me the powerful influences of thy grace more and more; and thereof particularly favour me with this great blessing the ensuing day; I would now bespeak thy presence; pray, prepare, and wait for it: Make me joyful in the house of prayer, glad with thy countenance; may I see *thy power and glory* in thy sanctuary; without which it will have no glory.

LORD'S-DAY NIGHT SEVEN O'CLOCK.

" BLESSED are they that dwell in thy house, *Ninth* " saith the Psalmist, and he adds this reason, *Specimen.* " *they will be still praising thee.* There is in- " deed always in God's house, both fit oppor- " tunity and plentiful matter of his praises. " But the greatest number of those that fre- " quent his house, do not *dwell in it*, their

" delight and affection is not there, therefore " they cannot praise him. They come in as " strangers, and have no skill of the songs of " praise. Yea and the very children of the " family, that worship in spirit and in truth, " find their instruments (their hearts) very " often quite out of tune for praises, and some- " times most of all, when praises are most " requisite. They still find such abundant " cause of complaint in themselves, weighing " down their spirits, that they can hardly at " all wind them up to magnify the God of " their mercies. If we would take a view, " and look back upon our carriage one day, in " the presence of God, who among us would " not find much work for sad thoughts? Would " not one find that he had an hard and stony " heart? Another a light, unconstant, wan- " dering heart, to complain of? A third an " unbelieving heart, and some all of these. " And they (if such there be) that have both " deeply sorrowed and been largely comforted, " will possibly, for all that, upon former sad " experience, be full of fears and jealousies, " that this sweet temper will not be of long " continuance; that ere long the world, or " some lust, will find or make a way to creep " in, and banish these heavenly thoughts, and " trouble that peace and joy that accompanies " them? Yet notwithstanding all these causes " of grief or fear, our causes of praise are " both more and greater; and there is no " reason that the sense of our own evil should " prejudice the acknowledgment of God's " goodness; yea, rather it should stir us up to " extol it so much the more. Cease not to " bemoan the evils of your own hearts; but

" withal forget not to magnify the riches of his
" grace towards you. These two will not
" hinder one another, but the due intermix-
" ture of them will make a very good harmony;
" and the fruit of them will be this, you shall
" have still more cause to praise, and less to
" complain. When the Lord shall find your
" humble acknowledges of his grace, he will
" delight to bestow more grace upon you, and
" will subdue those iniquities for you, which
" you cannot; and though he is pleased to do
" it but gradually, by little and little, yet in
" the end the conquest shall be full. *Bishop Leighton's Preface before a Sermon. p. 141.*

O my God! impress and form my heart for the work of praise, especially on the day of praise; how much am I reprobate to this good work? I have been about it this day, but alas how low my notes, how flat my devotions? The truth of it is, when things are best with me, I cannot allow myself to call such dull broken services as mine, such languid faint essays, *praises*; and therefore, after I have been attempting the high employment, and blundering in it, I find, methinks, a sort of satisfaction in reserving it to the state above, *then I shall praise him:* In the mean while I would be doing something; aiming at something, till the blessed time is come when I shall be able to sing the song of *Zion*, and no more hang my harp upon the willows. Lord, may I now learn a little of the *new song*, so well understood above; teach me some notes of it; I would be daily exercised in it, especially on thy day; and though I cannot yet wholly put off my sackcloth, nor will the noise of the shout of joy be always discerned from the noise of weeping, I desire, notwithstanding all discourage-

ments, to be a student in thy praise; to make it my great subject on solemn days especially; to *enter into thy gates with thanksgiving, and into thy courts with praise;* O may I *dwell in thy house and still praise thee.*

THURSDAY NIGHT SIX O'CLOCK.

Tenth Specimen. I THIS day heard a sermon from *Psal.* xv. 2. *And speaketh the truth in his heart.* After some account of the penman, occasion and design of the psalm, the words were considered as an answer to the question proposed in the first verse; *Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill?* And this observation was made from them *(viz.)* That it is a necessary part of the character of an approved worshipper of God here, who also is designed for heaven hereafter, that *he speaketh the truth in his heart.* The method was (I.) To explain the character, *He speaketh the truth in his heart.* (II.) To confirm the proposition, That this is a necessary part of a good man's character. (III.) To make application.

1st. To explain the character, *He speaketh the truth in his heart*: And here it was suggested that the thing intended is integrity and sincerity in our language; expressing the genuine sentiments of the mind without disguise: To illustrate which several things were observed, as (1.) That a person may speak the truth in the heart, when, strictly, there is not truth in the words; as when he reports a mistaken matter of fact after another; if he believes what he saith to be true, he is not guilty of a lie, even though it be false; though in this case we

ought to be cautious, and not too hastily take up a report. We must never assert positively what we do not know to be true, or have not sufficient reason to think so: And still greater caution is to be used, when others may receive prejudice by a mistaken, and false report. (2.) A person may speak what is fact and true, and yet not speak the truth in his heart; as when he thinks what he affirms as fact is not fact, though really it be fact: *He speaks not the truth in his heart*, though there be truth in his words. (3.) There are several modes of expressions that carry in them an appearance of falsehood, and yet are not so; nor do they at all partake of the nature of a lie; as metaphors, ironies, hyperboles, *&c.* (4.) A person may act contrary to his words and declarations, and yet not be chargeable with lying; as when we declare our purpose to do, or not to do a thing, and afterwards see reason to go contrary to the declaration; in this case there may be no violation of the laws of truth. Some limitations and cautions were added here, which I desire not to forget: For instance, that what we say and express, as our purpose, be truly so, and contain the present sense of our minds, that if the declaration be not rash, and that if we do not recede from the resolution or purpose we have declared, without good reason. In buying and selling, for example, we should not be hasty to declare we will give no more, or take no less; much less declare this to save ourselves in the bargain, when we have no such meaning; this is lying, and fraudulent lying. O my soul! be on thy watch here: So much regard is to be had to veracity, and so much distance kept from the very appearance of a lie, that I would

never make declarations of this kind, till I have weighed matters well, and my resolution is fixed; and when I have detained myself, I would ordinarily stand to my word, and not reverse it upon every little inconvenience, and never without explaining myself to those with whom I am concerned, *Psal.* xv. 4. (5.) The chief requisite here is, *that there be a correspondence between the inward sentiments and the outward expressions.* A lie is, *quando os & cordis sentiunt:* when we speak one thing and think another: And on the other hand, we speak the truth in our heart, when the tongue is *index animi*, doth truly interpret the mind.

And here we were admonished, that this sacred regard to truth is to be preserved always, especially from narratives, or representations of facts; when we relate any thing as said or done by ourselves or others, we should speak with sincerity or simplicity; without any romantic addition to embellish the story, and give it a turn to our own purpose. Oh! may I be cautious in this particular, and not suffer pride, malice, envy, or any other sinful passion, to bias me in my story; whenever I represent any thing as said or done, I would strictly keep to the laws of truth. The same regard to truth is to be preserved in promises, and in matters of testimony, or in witness-bearing: Oh! may I never take up a reproach against my neighbour, much less invent one!

The next particular insisted upon, was to confirm the observation, and shew that this is a necessary part of the character of an approved worshipper of God here, who is also designed for heaven hereafter, that *he speaketh the truth in his heart.* The text was urged to this pur-

pose : It was urged that veracity and truth, is represented as a branch of the new nature, *Eph.* iv. 24, 25. *Eph.* v. 9. And farther, that liars are expressly excluded heaven, *Rev.* xxi. 8. 27.

In the application, among other things, several arguments were offered against the sin of lying, as being the direct reverse of the grace here recommended ; which I desire now to review, and always keep in mind. It was argued that truth is the nature of God, and lying most contrary thereto, *Heb.* vi. 18. It is among those things, that he has a distinguished abhorrence of, and that are *an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. vi. 17. 19. Prov. xii. 22. O my soul! dread that which will make thee unlike God, and hateful to him. It was argued, that lying is a gross abuse of the noble organ of speech, the tongue is so often called our *glory;* that it is an enemy to society, and tends not only to disturb, but dissolve it, as it destroys mutual trust and confidence, without which society cannot long subsist ; that it is in itself infamous, and generally so accounted : Hence it is that the imputation of a lie is so much resented. It was urged, that the light of nature condemns it, and that it has been inveighed against by some of the wiser heathens, *Tit.* i. 12. that it is particularly and eminently the sin of the devil ; when he first discovers himself to the world, it was with a lie in his mouth, *Gen.* iii. 4. And our Saviour represents him as *the father of lies and liars*, John viii. 44. A liar is a child of the devil, his offspring, partakes of his nature, and bears his image in a very lively manner. It was argued, that a lying tongue is a certain mark of an unrenewed, unsanctified

heart, *Eph.* iv. 25. *Col.* iii. 9. *Prov.* xiii. 5. that it has a great deal of infidelity and atheism in it: We would not lie, if we were assured those we conversed with could discern our thoughts, and discover the baseness. God sees in secret, knows what is concealed, and yet we regard it not; an intimation that either we do not believe his presence, or do not stand in awe of his authority. To conclude, as lying is the character of a wicked man, so it effectually, and for ever, shuts the soul out of heaven. This is implied in the text, and expressed in other scriptures in the plainest terms, *Rev.* xxi. 27. *Rev.* xxii. 15. *Rev.* xxi. 8. *Prov.* xix. 5. 9.

O my soul! receive the admonition that has been given thee; study truth in the inward parts; let integrity and truth always accompany thee, and preserve thee; speak the truth in thy heart. I am thankful for any conviction and sense I have of the evil of lying: Lord, increase my abhorrence of it: As a farther assistance and help against this mean, sordid pernicious vice, I would endeavour and resolve, in pursuit of the directions laid before us in the sermon, to mortify those passions and corruptions from whence this sin of lying more ordinarily flows, and which are the chief occasion of it; As *out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts*, Matt. xv. 19. so from the same fountain proceed evil words. And I would, with the greatest zeal, set myself against such corruptions, as upon observation I find more commonly betray me into this iniquity: Pride often indites our speech, and coins many a lie; so envy, covetousness, malice, &c. I would endeavour to cleanse myself from all this filthiness: There never will be a regular tongue while there is an unmortified heart. If I love

the world inordinately, it is a thousand to one I shall be often stretching a point to promote a worldly interest; and if I hate my brother, it is the same odds I shall reproach him. Lord, help me to purge the fountain, and then the stream will be pure. When the spring of a clock, and all the movements are right, the hand will go right; and so it is here. The tongue follows the inward inclination. I would resolve to do nothing that may need a lie. If *Gehazi*'s covetousness had not shamed him, he had not wanted a lie to excuse him. *He that walks uprightly, walks surely*, and safely in this, as well as other respects, *Prov.* x. 9. May I do nothing that is dishonourable and mean, nothing that cannot bear the light, and then I shall have little temptation to lying. I would endeavour for a lively sense of the eye of God upon me, acting and speaking in his presence. Lord, I desire to set thee always before me; thou understandest my thoughts as perfectly as others do my words. I would consider before I speak, and not speak much or rashly, *Prov.* xxix. 20. I would often think of the severity of a future judgment, when every secret shall be made manifest, and the hypocrite and liar exposed before angels and men. Lastly, I would frequently beg divine assistance herein, *Psal.* cxix. 29. *Prov.* xxx. 8.

O my God! help me in my future conduct, remove from me the way of lying; may the law of kindness and truth be in my tongue; may I *take heed to* my *ways*, that I *sin not with* my *tongue*. I bewail my past miscarriages in this respect, and flee to thy mercy through the blood of Christ: Bless to me the instructions that have been this day given me; let no iniquity

prevail against me; *keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, and cleanse me from* secret faults. I commit my thoughts, desires, and tongue to thy conduct and government; may I think and act in thy fear, and always speak the truth in my heart.

THURSDAY NIGHT, SIX O'CLOCK.

Eleventh Specimen. I was this day attending public worship; the minister preached from *Matt.* vii. 12. *Therefore all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.* As I often found myself touched by the discourse, censured and convinced; I desire now to recollect what I can, and make application to my own soul. Lord, assist me by thy grace.

The words were considered as an admirable rule prescribed by our Saviour, for the due ordering our conduct and behaviour towards our neighbour; touching which, it was observed, that this rule is not only agreeable to the law of nature, but a dictate of it: It seems written upon the heart and consciences of all men, and what every one, that understands and considers it, assents to off hand. Some of the heathen moralists, that knew nothing of the Bible, discovered the equity of this maxim, and have recommended it. *Diogenes Laertius* tells us, in the life of *Aristotle*, that he being asked, how men should demean themselves towards friends, answered, as they would wish their friends should carry towards them. *Isocrates* frequently touches the same rule. Among his admonitions

to young men, this is one; manage thy anger towards those that offend, as thou wouldest judge becoming in others towards thyself offending. Again, be thou such towards thy parents, as thou wouldest wish thy children should be towards thee: And elsewhere, hereby thou wilt very much raise thy reputation, if it shall appear thou dost not those things thyself, thou wouldest reprehend in others doing them. This was remarked to signify, that the rule here prescribed has so much of natural equity in it, that it has the suffrage and vote of all mankind; however they practise, they cannot but agree, that they ought *to do as they would be done by.*

It was farther observed, that this rule comprehends all the duty we owe to our neighbour, and therefore our Saviour calls it in the text, *the law and the prophets.* Whatever the law and the prophets hath enjoined, with reference to this matter, is contained in this compend, *doing to others as we would they should do unto us:* The like abridgment the *apostle* gives us of the second table of the law, *Rom.* xiii. 8, 9. *he that loveth hath fulfilled the law.* It was also observed, that this rule supposes every man loves himself, and has a tender regard to his own interest; if self-love was not natural, deep rooted, and inseparable from us, it had not been made the measure of our acting towards others. It was again observed, that as we truly love ourselves, and desire our own happiness, so the rule includes the other great rule of the gospel, *that we love our neighbour as ourselves;* the one is the foundation of the other, and must first be learnt, or the other will never be practised. Why must I not injure my neighbour, any more than I would not be injured myself? The reason is,

because I am to love him as myself, and as sincerely desire his welfare as my own. Lord, teach me this love, and there will be an end to all insults, wrongs, hostile invasions, and oppressions.

Next, the rule was explained; in order to which it was suggested, that it is not to be understood that our desire and will, however biassed and depraved, is to be the measure of our acting towards others. A person may will another should do to him what is hurtful and sinful, but that will not warrant his doing the like to another: *Saul* would have his armour-bearer kill him; but it doth not follow that therefore he might kill his armour-bearer. But the meaning in short is, that whatever we desire, according to the laws of right reason, of equity and charity, another should do unto us, that we should do unto them. And this being laid down as the limitation of the rule, it was proposed as the chief intention and great advantage of the rule, *that in all our intercourse with our neighbour we should change persons with him, put ourselves in his stead, and then act towards him, as we would desire he should act towards us, was he in our place and we in his.* We should, saith *Lactantius, in aliis hominibus nos ipsos cogitare, in nobis alios*, consider ourselves in those we have to do with, and in ourselves consider others. In short, the great design of the rule is to exclude selfishness in our transactions with others, and treatment of them; and it is admirably contrived for that purpose, as it requires a commutation, or change of persons with them. Every man is tender of his own interest, would not be deprived of what is due to him, neglected, injured, or any way wronged; according to this rule he is

obliged to treat others with the like tenderness and equity he himself would be treated: And how happy a world would it be, what a glorious change would it introduce among us, was this precept made the measure of our acting! Oh! that all who heard these things, and had this admirable rule set before them, might transcribe and live in it. Lord! write it upon my heart; may I never forget it!

The minister proceeded to consider the extent of the rule. And here a great many cases were mentioned, wherein we should apply it, behaving towards others, as we would desire they should behave towards us, were they in our, and we in their circumstances; particularly persons, in their respective relations, should conduct themselves according to this rule; as husbands and wives, parents and children, master and servants, ministers and people, magistrates and subjects. Did persons retire into their own breasts, and impartially examine what it is they expect from their respective relatives, and perform the same to them, it would remove many complaints, redress many grievances, and model their behaviour very much to their mutual comfort and advantage. We should act by this rule in judging others: Some have thought the rule has special reference to that matter, connecting this with the first verse of the chapter. We should not judge rashly and severely, spying and magnifying the mote in our brother's eye; but let equity hold the balance, when we are weighing the actions of our neighbours; and in the mean time, charity should cast in as many grains of allowance as the nature of the thing, and as the standard and touchstone of the gospel will admit of. To make faults where there are

none, or aggravate such as are real, is the property of a very ill nature, shews envy, malice, &c. and is directly contrary to the great law of charity, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4. 7. and every one feels in himself how contrary it is to the rule in the text: We should take it ill to have our words and actions appear with a malicious gloss, and be commented upon with an uncharitable rigour; and consequently we should not mete this measure to others.

The rule must accompany us through all our conversation concerning others; direct us how to treat their character and actions (*viz.*) as we would be treated ourselves: Some take a pleasure in throwing dirt; if they can pick up any thing to the disadvantage of another, away they run with it through the town, and are as *Solomon* speaks, a maul, a sword, and a sharp arrow, *Prov.* xxv. 18. they wound the good name of their neighbour, batter down his reputation, and shoot at him privily. Sometimes they do this more openly, by downright calumny; sometimes by invidious insinuations. How little regard they have to the rule in the text, every one may observe. Would persons put themselves in the stead of their neighbour, it would stop their mouth, or give another turn to their discourse: And as this rule should be observed in our converse about others, so in our converse *with* them, and restrain us from an haughty, proud, insulting carriage: We do not like this ourselves; would not have our infirmities exposed, and weaknesses triumphed over; would not be despised and made little; well, the same tenderness we have for ourselves, we should express towards others. The rule also extends to the forgiving injuries, and would be

of excellent use here, if duly applied: How often do we need the charity of our brethren! This or that person has offended us, we are implacable, no after-carriage can restore them to our friendship; there needs no more to shame us out of this unchristian rigour of temper, than to reflect on our rule. Should God deal so with us, we were lost for ever; and should man deal so with us, the consequence would be our exclusion from society, or at least from the comforts of it. The same rule is to be observed in all the cases of necessity, misery, and distress, in which at any time we may find our brethren: We should change persons with them, put ourselves in their stead, and thence learn how to behave towards them: We should sometimes in our thoughts step down into the circumstances of the most indigent, that we may the better learn the force of their oratory, *hear the cry of the poor*. Though indeed all such cries ought to be prevented; but while it is not so, the rule in the text will teach us some regard to them. Were we melancholy and distressed in spirit, widows, orphans, sick and in prison, how would we expect others should treat us; without bowels and compassion, a kind look, word, or action? Certainly not. Well, what we would justly desire for ourselves in such circumstances, we are to do towards others who are in them.

It was observed, that the rule extends to that great right of human nature, every man's judging for himself in matters of religion. Every one here is ready to complain of impositions, and thinks himself exceedingly injured by them; and yet how common is it for him that judgeth, and condemneth another, to do the same thing.

If it be said, men ought to judge right, I answer, every one thinks he doth so, and it is impossible he should think otherwise: So that whoever imposes his sentiments upon another, without convincing him of the truth of them, violates the most fundamental right of conscience, is unjust in the highest degree, and tramples the maxim in the text under foot: The rule should take place in all matters of trust committed to us; as in secrets, the execution of wills, and the like. No man would herein be betrayed; a breach of trust in these things is often of the worst consequence, and what we would abhor in others, and therefore should never be guilty of ourselves. Lastly, the rule was recommended as of eminent use in traffic, in buying and selling. Here the laws of commutative justice are to be observed, therefore should be *ratio dati et accepti;* equality must be kept between buyer and seller; the seller is to receive a moderate gain, and the buyer a just pennyworth. Something was offered to state this equality, and the rule in the text applied to the case, *viz.* that the buyer and seller should change persons, each put himself in the other's place, and do as he would reasonably desire to be done by: Such a commutation would go far to cure the selfishness that is the bane of commerce, and really be the best casuist in these matters. I would not be injured by an ill commodity, or any exorbitant price; was I a buyer, the same equity (that my conscience necessarily approves) should govern me when I am a seller. *Caveat emptor*, is a rule I cannot reconcile to the Bible; the meaning is, let the buyer look about him, it is his own fault if he be cheated; whereas it might be more my fault than his: I

should not suffer him to cheat himself, and resolve he shall not be cheated by me. This the laws of justice and equity require, and if I act otherwise, conscience must tell me I forget the rule of our Saviour, and do as I would not be done by.

O my soul! apply and endeavour to improve what thou hast read; study this rule, and let it govern thee in all thy correspondence with thy neighbour; bewail past neglects, and labour for a more exact compliance with it for the future: Consider the excellency and importance of the rule. It is said of the emperor *Severus*, that he was so much pleased with this sentence of the gospel, that he caused it to be inscribed over the gates of the palace; and so highly did he honour the author, that he built a temple to him, added him to the number of his gods: And when he saw any of his soldiers committing spoils in the fields of others, he would reprove them, quoting this divine passage against them; *Wouldest thou have this done in thy field, which thou dost in the fields of others?* But whether the emperor said such things, and practised accordingly, or not, the equity of the rule is undeniable, and indeed self-evident; nature teaches it, scripture teaches it, the Son of God himself teaches it; not only as having equity in it, but as being the test of equity, and comprising in itself the substance of all equity. O my soul! consider the sacredness of this rule, thou canst not violate it without the reproach of thy own conscience, as a man, and contradicting thy profession as a Christian. No pretences to faith, no zeal in the forms of worship, will avail any one, that is prevailingly selfish, unjust and oppressive towards others. If I neglect the great

essential laws of natural and revealed religion, I am but an hypocrite, whatever disguise of sanctity I may appear in. As he that loves fulfilleth the law; so he that loveth not, that neglects this maxim of justice and love, violates the law of it; he tramples under foot the whole law and prophets at once. And I would farther consider, that the gross notorious violation of this rule is often remarkably punished in this world. *Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again*, Matt. vii. 1, 2. The severe censurer, the backbiter and slanderer, that delights in scandal, and can scarce let any one pass without a lash of his tongue, and without throwing out some of his poison of asps, is generally paid in his own coin; others use the same freedom with his reputation, as he has done with theirs: And the same may be observed in other instances, wherein persons cast this sacred rule of commerce behind their back. Let *no man*, saith the *apostle*, *go beyond, or defraud his brother in any* thing, for *God is the avenger of all such*, 1 Thess. iv. 6. Sometimes the vengeance is taken in this world; providence retaliates the crime, punishes it in kind, letting loose the passions of others upon us in the same way ours worked towards them. *When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shall be spoiled; and when thou hast made an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee*, Isa. xxxiii. 1. *Adonibezek* had his cruelty returned into his own bosom, *Judges* i. 6, 7. Many such instances there are in present providence; thousands that we do not understand, and cannot expound. However, should the punishment be deferred, it will come; if men be not the instruments of God's wrath now,

he will take the work into his own hand hereafter. *God is the avenger of all such*, and will execute vengeance sooner or later.

O my God! teach me thy statutes; this great rule particularly of my Lord and Master. I am ashamed to think how much I have neglected it; how apt I have been to weigh myself and neighbour in different balances; that I have had no more regard to this excellent precept, that comes recommended to me by the highest authority, and stands approved by my own conscience. Lord, forgive my selfishness, my injustice in words and actions, and in all my carriage * towards my neighbour.

I would resolve for the future, by thy grace, to exercise more love and benevolence towards mankind, to mortify myself, to put off that un-

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* I do not expect, that the most serious and devout should review the sermons they hear, as largely and according to this specimen; much less that they should thus review *every* sermon. What I propose, is, that sometimes the sermons heard should be reviewed, with such remarks as the subject of the discourse may require. Such as take notes may do it more fully and distinctly; others, if they design it, and accordingly attend to what they hear, may be able from their memory to furnish proper matter for such an exercise. If they retain only the general method, the main scope of the discourse, and some particular heads with such passages as they find themselves most nearly concerned in, it may be sufficient for the purpose. And I am mistaken, if a few sermons thus used, thus recollected, applied and preached over in private, do not prove of more advantage than many hundreds heard in the careless manner, that is usual, (*i. e.*) are never thought of afterwards, but the hearer and preacher have done together. One half hour or hour, once or twice a week (and as often as any thing occurs from the pulpit that calls for it), thus employed, would turn to good account, and gloriously quit the cost; not only help persons to hear with more attention, but profit more by what they hear.

due self-love, that has been the occasion of so much injury to others, and dishonour to my profession. O! that I may love my neighbour as myself.

I would resolve to set this rule constantly before me in my intercourse with mankind; consider myself in them, and offer them nothing I should not like myself; or according to the laws of impartial reason and equity, I could object against: I would bind it about my neck, write on the posts of my house, my shop, or rather beg that God would write it on the table of my heart.

In any doubtful actions, wherein I am to play the casuist, I have recourse to this rule for my help in the decision. If I am questioning whether this or that be just and charitable to my neighbour, I desire presently to substitute myself in his stead, and then make a judgment. Lord, pour out upon me more of the Spirit of grace and love: May I add to my faith all other graces, and among the rest *brotherly kindness and charity;* the grace of heaven, *which never faileth.* And as I am preparing for that state, may I have in greater abundance the temper that suits it. In the mean time, may I walk in uprightness and love, and exercise myself daily unto this, to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

THURSDAY NIGHT, SIX O'CLOCK.

Specimen XII. THIS day I attended the lecture in the usual course, and heard a sermon from the text, 1 *Pet.* ii. 1. *Laying aside all envies*——In the

discourse several things were offered, that I thought myself not a little concerned in, and therefore desire to take this opportunity to review what I can remember, and preach it over again to myself. Lord grant me the Spirit of light, and life from above.

(1.) It was proposed to explain the sin, shew wherein it consists; and it was represented as a secret grudge and displeasure at the good of another: Where the object was considered, *viz.* the good of another, the advantages another has, supposed or real, and that either above us, or in common with us; and even sometimes, though he have it in a lower degree than what we have, or imagine we have. Any supposed excellency is the object of the envy; as wealth and outward prosperity, *Prov.* iii. 31. *Isai.* i. 11. 13. *Psal.* lxxiii. 1. Esteem, honour, favour, *Acts* vii. 9. *Ps.* cvi. 16. *Matt.* xxvii. 18. Parts, learning, good works, *Eccles.* iv. 4. nay even grace and favour with God affords matter for this corruption to work upon, so vile is it, *Gen.* iv. 5. As to the act, it lies in a secret displeasure, an inward grudge, *Gen.* iv. 5. The scripture calls it *an evil eye*, Matt. xx. 15.

(2.) Some observations were made concerning this sin; as that it is what we are all prone to: It is a distemper of our nature, *James* iv. 5. *Vidi parvulum zelantem*, &c. saith *Austin.* I have seen a little child look pale with envy. It is generally found, and more strongly worketh betwixt persons that have something of equality. "Envy lies most between beings of the same "nature. We do not envy brutes, though "they exceed us in many respects, not incon-"siderable. No man is displeased with a bird, "because she can fly, and he cannot; we are

" not offended with the strength of an elephant " or swiftness of an horse ; the reason is, these " are all foreign commodities, not looked on as " the growth of our soil, which makes them " neither expected nor desired, and that is " enough to lay our envy asleep. Nor do we " envy the higher condition of the angels ; the " reason is partly, that the angels are seldom " seen : Their grandeur lies hid ; but chiefly, " the model of our nature was drawn less than " that of the angels ; and therefore, though we " may admire them, we do not envy them : " We do not think ourselves diminished and " reflected on, when their superior excellency " is acknowledged." Envy is between creatures of the same common nature ; between men and men, and not between men and brutes, or between men and angels ; nor indeed doth it obtain so ordinarily and in so great degree, where there is the utmost inequality and distance among creatures of the same nature. It works most where there is something of equality ; as between persons of the same age, birth, and education ; between persons of the same calling and employment. Scholars envy scholars, soldiers envy soldiers, &c. and in all cases where there is ill will, enmity and animosity, the envy is more easily excited.

It was observed that it has its rise from pride ; this is the true spring and cause of it. Men would shine alone, or at least cannot bear that others should outshine or eclipse them. They are their own idols, and would have all the incense offered unto them. It was observed that this vice variously discovers itself: It is discovered to a man's self secretly, by the uneasiness it gives him : It is rottenness to the bones, the

saw of the mind, as the orator calls it; it doth, as it were, tear the heart, prey upon the spirits, and destroy the comfort of every enjoyment, *Gen.* iv. 5. 7. It discovers itself in a sort of triumph at the falls, dishonours, diminutions, and any sort of miseries of another; in concealing from others what tends to their advantage: Envy hides its talents, that others may not partake of the honour and comfort of them. It discovers itself in defamation, nibbling at the reputation of those we envy, and endeavouring to blast it; we are grieved at their good and their several advantages, wish them lower, and therefore attempt to bring them lower.

(3.) The evil of it was next displayed. It is reckoned among *the works of the flesh*, *adultery*, *fornication*, *uncleanness*, *idolatry*, &c. *Gal.* v. 21. It is represented as the character of the unregenerate, *Tit.* iii. 3. *Rom.* xiii. 13. It is the greatest enemy to peace, the peace of a man's own mind: It is a constant torture within, as every one experiences, that is under the power of it; and it is no less an enemy to the peace of society, hence it is so commonly joined with strife and the like in the sacred scriptures, as *Rom.* i. 29. xiii. 13. *Gal.* v. 20, 21. It is often impetuous and carries persons to the greatest excesses of rage. Nothing would satisfy *Cain*'s envy, but the blood of his brother; and from the same principle it was that *Saul* attempted *David*'s life. It is an affront to God, as it carries in it a censure of his Providence in his distributions: It disputes his sovereignty; will not suffer him to do what he will with his own, and arraigns his wisdom, as if he had placed his favours wrong, and made an unwise disposal of them. *It grieves the Spirit of God*, Gal. v. 25, 26. It

is the most unreasonable and absurd of all vices; it sickens at the sight of health, and languishes over prosperity. The philosopher, to express his detestation of it, wishes the envious man more eyes and ears than others, that he might be tormented by seeing and hearing of other men's happiness. In a word, it is the sin of the devil, his very image and nature. He could not behold the felicity of our first parents in paradise without attempting to ruin it; and from the same spiteful mischievous nature he acts in all the plots he has been carrying on against mankind ever since.

And O my soul! what reason have I to be humbled and even abhor myself, that I am polluted, so far polluted with this——what shall I call it? Wickedness, vileness, diabolism. Justly might God send me to hell, the place of envy and malice. O! for mercy, Lord, forgive my exceeding sinfulness. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow;* cleanse me from all my filthiness, both of flesh and of spirit.

Three things I would resolve upon, and seriously endeavour. To get pride mortified: That is the root of bitterness, from whence this, and indeed most others of my evils spring. To get my charity more increased: I would take pleasure in the welfare of my neighbour; be always ready to give him his just praise; study to promote his happiness and comfort as my own; never think myself lessened by his advantages and enjoyments, but take occasion from the bounty of heaven to him, to magnify the Giver, and rejoice with the receiver. I would endeavour to pray down more of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of love, to mortify this and all other

my corruptions. Lord look upon me in mercy. How like hell has sin made poor apostate man! Nothing but thy grace can raise us to heaven; can give us the temper of heaven, and fit us for the element of goodness and love. Lord grant me thy Spirit, to correct and heal my nature; make make me more like thyself. *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

LORD'S-DAY NIGHT, FIVE O'CLOCK.

Specimen XIII.

THE text to-day was *Ja.* iv. 11. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren.* Several things in the sermon came close to my conscience, and gave me occasion to say with *Pharaoh*'s butler, *I remember my fault this day.* Great reason I have to reflect upon, and censure my infirmities. Blessed be God for his good word, and for a gospel-ministry: I find the truth of the character of holy scripture, *that it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness;* and I find it more so, as opened and applied by ministers. Lord, give them the tongue of the learned, help them rightly to divide the word of truth. I am thankful for the advantage I found in attending upon this institution this day; and as I saw myself in the glass of the word, I would again hold the glass before the eye of my soul, and therein take a farther view of myself. Lord, search me and try me; make thy word quick and powerful, effectually profitable for my *correction.*

The text was criticised upon, and in part explained by the other text, *Tit.* iii. 2. *Put them*

in mind to speak evil of no man; where it was noted, the word in the *Greek* signifies to *blaspheme*, *i. e.* to wound or hurt the reputation or fame; so that the sense is, that we are not to speak to the disadvantage or prejudice of another; or as the word in the present text imports, *speak against one another*. I shall recollect some things that were said according to the method of the discourse. (1.) It was suggested, that it is not all speaking evil of another that is here condemned. (2.) It was inquired what is that speaking evil forbid, and when persons are guilty of it. (3.) The causes of it were also inquired into. (4.) Some arguments were offered against it.

(1.) It was suggested, that it is not all speaking evil of one another that is here condemned. It is sometimes so far from being a sin to do this, that it is a great duty: Magistrates may lay open the crimes of such as are arraigned before them. Private persons, as witnesses, may declare the evil they know of others; and not to do it in some cases, would involve them in guilt, *Levit.* v. 1. And the like may be said in cases of more private discipline; that of particular churches and families. The household of *Chloe* informed the apostle of the contentions and schisms of the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* i. 11. *Joseph* informed his father of the miscarriages of his brethren, *Gen.* xxxvii. 2. The people brought to *Eli* an account of the wickedness of his sons, 1 *Sam.* ii. 23. Nor doth it seem there was any fault in all this, any sinful evil speaking. The execution of public justice, the safety of the community, the order and discipline of families and churches, allow and require this liberty, that some persons speak evil of others, *i. e.* lay

their faults before such as are concerned to animadvert upon them. Farther, it is not unlawful to take notice and speak of public and notorious scandals. When persons declare their sin as *Sodom*, it is no offence against this rule to mention it, if it be only to shew an abhorrence of it. Nor is it any fault in historians, impartially to relate the grosser miscarriages of those they are concerned with, especially of persons in public stations. Many valuable ends may be served hereby; a mark of infamy set upon crimes that deserve it; caution administered to others, *&c.* It is observable that inspired historians leave on record the failings of some of the greatest and best of men; as of *Noah*, *Lot*, *Moses*, *Aaron*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Peter*, and others. It may sometimes be lawful to speak of the evil we know of others, for the caution of our friends; as to prevent prejudicial alliances, dangerous trusts or intimacies, though here, to be sure, we are not to aggravate faults, make every mote a beam, ruin any one's character *at once and for ever*, because of some blemish we imagined or found in it; much less are we to invent faults, or suppose them, without sufficient evidence. The same liberty is allowable when the speaking evil of another is necessary to our own vindication, or the vindication of any innocent person; and there are many cases in which it may be necessary: The guilty must be laid open, or the innocent will suffer. It was added in the last place, it may not be altogether unwarrantable, nor fall under the reproof of this text, to speak of the faults of others, though none of the forementioned ends can be served by it. Intimate friends may mention the failings of their neighbours and brethren, to bewail them and lament

them, especially if it be done with a charitable design, and attempt of correcting them. If a person suffer by the fault of another, by unkindness, injustice and ill carriage, it may be allowable to communicate such grievances to friends, for their advice and counsel; and even their compassion and sympathy may afford some little relief, if they can do nothing else for us: And in these cases it may not be unlawful to speak evil of another; the text, it was supposed, doth not respect such speaking of evil.

And this being premised, it was inquired, (2.) what the evil speaking, here condemned, is, and when persons may be said to be guilty of it. (1.) They are guilty in the grossest manner, when they forge evil of others, and publish it to their hurt. This is downright malicious calumny, and yet has been, and is too common, *Matt.* v. 11. *Ahab* found sons of *Belial* to witness against *Naboth*, that he *blasphemed God and the king*, 1 Kings xxi. 13. Many a one has had reason to complain with the psalmist, *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not*, Psal. xxxv. 11. (2.) Persons are guilty of this sin when they speak evil of another, without evidence that it is true; though we do not know it to be false, yet if we do not know it to be true, it is a great fault. And this is aggravated, when we are forward to believe and take up the reproach, and to spread it; when we are pleased with the ill we are propagating, especially if it be very much to the prejudice of our neighbour; and in the mean time, whilst we spread the ill story, we ourselves suspect the truth of it. Hast thou, O my soul, been herein guilty? If so, tears are but a low expression of the resentment that is due. (3.)

We may be chargeable with the sin of evil-speaking, even when the evil we speak of another we know to be true; as when we give it as bad a turn as possible, leave out every circumstance that might in part excuse or extenuate the evil; when it can serve no good end, and we have no call to speak the ill things of another we are privy to, and what reason have I here to cry, *guilty, guilty!* to fall on my face and abhor myself! Though I dare not invent a scandal, forge ill, and charge on my neighbour, yet how often have I unnecessarily published the ill I know of him! And has not ill-will to him, malice, envy, and the like wicked principle, prompted me to this uncharitable office! Lord, have mercy upon me; *wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* It was observed (4.) that this iniquity is sometimes committed by innuendo's and insinuations. Have you heard, saith the backbiter, any thing of such a person? I am not willing to believe it; do not care for speaking: Now I grant there may be a little fault in all this: They may be words of truth, soberness and charity, if the person that speaks them has just occasion to do it; but often all these smooth things are said on purpose to disguise malice, and wound the deeper. They first said they knew something of such a one very ill, and that they are unwilling to believe it, and yet would have others believe it, and leave them to suspect it to be much worse than it is. (5.) It is very common for detractors and calumniators, when they cannot find fault with persons actions, to censure their principles: If this or that thing be allowed to be well done, they presently find something to sully it; if there had not, say they, been so

much pride, &c. in it.——Like the devil, that could not object against *Job*'s good character, but then he insinuates, he was selfish, and an hypocrite in all, *Job* i. 9. In short, persons of this temper *will* have others nought, and therefore if they cannot find matter *without*, for the spirit of censure and detraction to fasten upon, they enter *within*, judge in the dark, and speak evil of things they know not, nor can know. Lord, preserve me from this malicious presumption; save me from every degree of it, pardon my past guilt.——

(3.) The causes and secret springs of this vice were laid open. In some it proceeds very much from a churlish dogged temper: They love to throw dirt, and bespatter; are constantly snarling at almost every body that comes in their way, even when there is no special enmity on their part, and no particular provocation given them by any. It often proceeds from resentment of injuries, real or supposed. Hence that admonition, 1 *Pet.* iii. 8, 9. *Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous, not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.* To the same purpose, *Matt.* v. 44. if others rail, speak evil of us, or act ill towards us, we are apt this way to avenge ourselves. O! may I be on my guard here; guard against ill impressions from the carriage of others, to the diminution and hurt of my charity; if I suffer wrath and enmity in the heart, railing, backbiting and evil speaking will follow, *Col.* iii. 8. It frequently has rise from pride and envy. The proud man would shine alone, at least appear with some distinguished lustre. He is ready to think all the good things said of another, and all the honours paid him, is so much lost to himself; and

hence as he envies the reputation of his brother, he sets himself by a malevolent tongue, to lessen and ruin it. He seeks to rise by the depression, and shine by the eclipse of others. Hellish quality this! and yet, how prevailing! How common a source of detraction and evil speaking! It was remarked that bigotry, a blind zeal in matters of religion, is a very common cause of this practice: Such is the fury and real fanaticism frequently, of men of this spirit, who are under the influence of a warm party-zeal, that none can differ from them, but they presently set them up as enemies, and think it allowable to prosecute them as such: They are heterodox, heretics, and all that is nought; and having made them thus vile in their own imagination, they scruple not to represent them and treat them accordingly; hence bitterness, wrath, clamour, and evil-speaking; hence a course and habit of calumny, and that allowed, and it may be gloried in; the pretended zeal is supposed to hallow all these vile passions.

O my soul! endeavour a greater dread of this sin (evil-speaking), a more rooted abhorrence of it: Improve what has been said to this purpose this day. It was observed, that it is a very common failing of good men, such as make conscience of other gross sins, are more easily surprised into this. It was not altogether without reason, that a father (*St. Jerom*) calls it one of the last snares of the devil. O may I be convinced of the evil of it! It is an high instance of uncharitableness, and exceeding pernicious and hurtful. It is hurtful to those of whom we speak evil, it destroys (so far) their reputation; it is hurtful to those to whom we speak, it destroys their charity; it is hurtful to ourselves,

* it destroys our peace, *grieves the Spirit of God*, &c. *Eph.* iv. 30, 31, 32. It is an high offence against God, and contempt of his authority; hence that of the apostle, *James* iv. 11. *He that speaketh evil of another, speaketh evil of the law;* he undervalues it, tramples upon it, as worthy of no regard, not fit to prescribe to him; he despiseth the commandment of the Lord to *do evil in his sight.* O my soul! do not extenuate this crime, and because it is a common sin, think it is no sin, or a little one. It has a great deal of malignity in it; so the scripture represents it, placing it among the worst, the most scandalous iniquities, and making it the character of the worst men, *Rom.* i. 29, 30. 2 *Cor.* xii. 20. *Eph.* iv. 31. 1 *Cor.* v. 11. O! may I consider this, and now say (I have great reason to say it, Lord, help me by thy grace) *that I will take heed to my way, that I offend not with my tongue.* I would take up a resolution of more caution for the future. How happy should I think myself, could I say with an eminent minister: I bless God, saith he, I have not given any man's reputation a secret wound behind his back for many years. Lord, teach me thy statutes, guide me in thy truth and teach me.

Two or three things I would resolve upon, touching my future conduct: Not unnecessarily, and so much as is common, makes others the subject of my conversation; nor need this make a vacuity in discourse, I may find enough to

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* A calumniator is said by the *Hebrew* doctors to speak with a threefold tongue, because he hurteth three therewith; himself by sin, his neighbour whom he backbiteth, and the receiver of his tale, whom he corrupteth.

talk of, without talking constantly of others. As God, the works of God, daily providences, the Bible, myself, my failings, wants, mercies, the necessities and miseries of others, the news, &c. and indeed almost any thing, rather than my neighbour, when I bring him upon the stage only to kick him or lash him. I would resolve, when I speak of others, to speak all the good I can of them; not that we are to call evil good, palliate, excuse, much less plead for, and vindicate downright sin and wickedness: When I am called to speak of very ill men, and very ill things, it may be fit to speak justly of them, and shew my dislike; but I would ordinarily keep off this subject, and when I speak of others, speak as much good of them as I can, especially when I am speaking of good men, chusing to enlarge on their excellencies, and touch their faults more sparingly. I would resolve to think as well of my neighbour as I can; would not hearken to whisperers, backbiters, nor give way to evil surmises, but maintain all the esteem I can for others, and cherish the charity that believeth all things, and hopeth all things. Above all, I would see that I never take pleasure in thinking or speaking evil of others. If it once be grievous to me to think of and hear of the ill things of others, it will be grievous to me to speak of them, and there will need little else to restrain me from speaking of them unseasonably, unnecessarily, and to their hurt. Lord, Lord, shed abroad the love of my neighbour in my heart: May I love him as myself; forgive my many and great miscarriages in this instance, and wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity. Purge the fountain, cleanse me from all filthiness of the spirit:

grant me a pure and charitable heart, and I shall have a pure lip and charitable tongue.

THURSDAY NIGHT, EIGHT O'CLOCK.

Specimen XIV. I THIS day heard a sermon about forgiving one another. The text was *Mark* xi. 25. *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any.* I do not pretend to remember all the particulars of the sermon. I have before heard and read many things on the like subject, and to the like purpose. But alas! how defective in this, as well as other duties? I need, I am sure, to have my mind stirred up by way of remembrance. Lord, keep these things upon the imagination of the thoughts of my heart for ever. In the explication of the duty in the text, *forgiving others*, when we have an act against them, it was hinted, that it implies we do not seek revenge, nor endeavour to retaliate the injury, *Rom.* xii. 19. 1 *Thess.* v. 15. Nor are we to desire that God should take vengeance, like *Brutus*, who when he could not have his will on his enemy, cried out passionately to *Jupiter* to fall upon him. O! may I stand clear in this matter. If I forgive mine enemy, I must wish him well; neither hurt him myself, nor desire his hurt. I am not bound to take him for a friend, and make him my confident: But I am to wish his good, rejoice in his good, and be ready to do him any good office.

Among many other things that were offered in the progress of the discourse, a great deal of suitable advice that was given, two or three particulars I desire to take special notice of; O

may I never forget them! (1.) That we should endeavour to heap coals of fire upon the head of our enemies, subdue them with kindness, overcoming evil with good. It was a noble reply of a philosopher to an angry enraged man: *Let me die*, saith he, *if I be not revenged on him:* Let me die, replied the philosopher, if I do not make him my friend. (2.) The example of one was mentioned and recommended, as it well deserved, that used to keep a list of such as had injured him, that he might wait an opportunity of doing them good. Lord, grant me this charity, I shall think myself happier and richer in it, than in all the treasure of both hemispheres. (3.) It was suggested we should with the greatest care watch our own spirits (and attend to the duty of forgiving others) under special provocations and trials: As when our most friendly designs and kindest endeavours are requited with ill nature, reproach and all manner of ill offices; and there being something of this in my own case at present, I would look upon myself as more than ordinarily concerned to mind the admonition. Lord, the preparation of the heart is from thee, impress and form it to a correspondence with my duty. I would particularly resolve to insert the name of the person, I have so much reason to complain of, for a most unjust and ungrateful carriage, in the list of offenders, whom I have to forgive, and who are to be the objects of my charity and kindness, as opportunity offers. I would resolve not to mention the provocation and the aggravations of it *unnecessarily;* and no farther than my own vindication, and the cause of justice and truth requires, I would resolve daily to remember this offender

in my prayers to recommend him to the divine blessing, teaching mercy and forgiveness; hereby I shall not only exercise but increase my charity, and take a likely means to prevent all bitterness, rancour and malice of mind. Lord, be thou my instructor. Grant a blessing to thy word, and to thy ministry, and make my heart upright before thee, and sound in thy statutes. Amen, and Amen.*

NEW-YEAR'S DAY, SIX O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING.

Specimen XV. IT having pleased God, in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways, to bring me to the beginning of another year, I desire to employ myself in such devotion as is suitable to the present circumstances of time, to review the state of things with me the last year, and my conduct in it; to state accounts between God and my soul, at the beginning of this year, and to lay down measures for my behaviour in it, and through it, if it please God to spare me this year also. In the review of the last year, I find a great many mercies to bless God for: Mercy and goodness has

* I am persuaded that a few Sermons heard in this manner, with such reflection afterwards, and self-application, will turn to a better account (as before intimated) than a thousand heard in the way that I am afraid is common; when we are like a man that beholds his natural face in a glass, and goeth away, and forgetteth what manner of man he was; and therefore cannot but earnestly recommend this method to the reader. I should have added more examples upon other subjects, but have already far exceeded the bounds intended upon the head of Meditation, and therefore must forbear.

followed me all the year; filled up every month, week and day of it. God has graciously preserved an unprofitable, very low, mean and worthless life; a providence I ought to be the more affected with, since it has been a year of so great mortality; many have fallen at my side, many at my right hand, but the arrow of death has not come near me. Persons of various characters and conditions, of every age, young and old, many of my particular acquaintance, have this last year gone into eternity; the pious, judicious, useful Mr. ——, the hopeful young Mr. ——, and yet I am left, a poor cumberground! Lord, what shall I render? I would chiefly value life as it is a seed time for eternity. If I shall have another year, may I employ it well and for eternity! And the same kind providence has extended to mine also; he has preserved my family in health in the midst of sickness and death: A good measure of prosperity has attended me in my outward affairs, and in the management of my calling. I escaped a very great blow in my concern with ——, which would very much have incumbered and straitened me, had not a kind providence prevented, which I have reason to think it did, by a special interposition in my behalf. Some special spiritual blessings I have to recount this year, some notice I have taken of them in my diary, and desire now to revive the memory of them. I have reason to hope good impressions have been made upon the heart of my ——, a mercy I have often sought with strong crying and tears. I met with many favourable providences in my journey to ——, I heard a sermon by Mr. —— from *Matt.* xxv. 33. which I hope I received much

advantage from. I remember I was not only affected when I heard it, but it sent me to my knees ——. I have reason to hope God made me of some use to ——. Lord, I rejoice in thy favours towards me; make me more attentive, zealous and watchful; more solicitous to receive and do good. I have enjoyed the means of grace, sabbaths, sermons, sacraments, in an uninterrupted course, not without refreshments and consolations (alas! that they have been so little and so seldom) which I value more than all the world. I have had some comfortable hours upon my knees, and hope God has granted me somewhat more of the spirit of grace and supplication than heretofore I had experienced. I have had some remarkable answers of prayer this year, particularly upon occasion of ——, as recorded in my diary. I would humbly hope I have made some advances in religion; have gained some victory over a sin that easily besets me, and that I have often bewailed. And I desire never to forget the support, conduct and comfort I had under a very peculiar trial and exercise I met with this year in the affair of ——. Lord, what shall I render? I have no words big and strong enough to express the sense I ought to have, and hope I have of thy bounty, condescension and grace. I find myself often, of late, when about such work, *praising God*, inclined to refer it to eternity; not but I would be attempting something, and do my best now; but *then*, and not before, shall I praise him, truly praise him. Lord, assist me in this service; accept my poor acknowledgments for the series and current of mercies that has run through the last year; accept the sacrifice of a

grateful heart; accept my heart as the sacrifice.

And oh! how many the sins of the last year? more than can be numbered, more than the sand on the sea shore. It might have been expected after such an history of mercies, nothing could have offered on my part, nothing to be set against them but love, gratitude, devotion and obedience. But alas! —— what shall I say? it is otherwise; I have not rendered unto the Lord according to his benefits. My diary admonishes me of several defects and miscarriages, and conscience admonishes me of more: But as I am conscious to myself of exceeding disorders, and as the distinct consideration of this matter is of no small consequence to me, I purpose, as soon as I can, as my custom has been some years past, to set a day apart for examination, humiliation, prayer, and thanksgiving; I shall only at present reflect on a few things: The first is the mispence of time, precious, invaluable time; four of the twelve months I slept away, which, though I do not mention as my sin, yet ought to be considered in the computation of my time. — I had only eight months to live *after a sort:* And how much of this was squandered away? one half shall I reckon? it may be more, in an undue, excessive pursuit of the world; in unnecessary, idle visits, company, diversions, amusements, *&c.* O my soul! bewail thy inadvertency and folly; weep over lost time. Is this living for eternity? How have I trifled in the duties of solemn worship; those of the closet, family and assembly; in my converse with God and with man? How have I neglected my watch? How unguarded my thoughts,

my affections, my tongue? Oh! vile above measure: Whoever trust in themselves that they are righteous, surely I cannot. Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. The more particular examination of conscience and life, I refer to the solemn day designed; only two or three particulars I shall take notice of, which are so obvious, that they need no search. I still find cause of the old complaint of pride and vanity upon several occasions: I hope I have got some ground of it, but it is far from being mortified as it ought to be. I find myself yet addicted to, and often fallen into the sin of backbiting and detraction. I find myself the last year more pleased with the world, and more keen in the prosecution of it than I used to be. Oh! for help against this enemy. I find thoughts of dying not so grateful to me as sometimes they have been: There is a strange and unusual damp upon my mind when I look into the other world, and I know not how many foolish questions arise about separate Spirits, where they are, what they do and enjoy. Once I could rejoice at the thoughts of putting off the body; but now it is less so; though still I hope I can say, I would not part with my prospects of another world for a thousand such worlds as this: And I have, upon some occasions of trial, the last year, wofully mismanaged, as noted in my diary. Lord, pity and relieve a poor distempered creature, that desires now to lye at thy foot, waiting for thy salvation.

If God will please to afford me another year, to the beginning of which he has brought me, I purpose and resolve, by his grace —— to hold on in the course of religion I have for some

time been engaged in, though with all the improvement I can make. To watch against the miscarriages of the last year, the temptations I suffered most by, the snares I fell into. To pursue the good rules I have heretofore set myself, and which I have found of no small advantage; these I purpose to revise, add to, or change, as I see occasion. I resolve to spend a day, or part of a day, once in — weeks, in fasting or thanksgiving, or both, as the state of my affairs may direct and require: To lay by so much of my estate and income for charitable uses the next year. A few years ago I fixed the proportion I then thought proper; but as God has prospered me, and very much increased me since, I must increase my charity; and therefore I determine to add this year -----*l.* to my former disbursements this way. I resolve to be more temperate in ——. I still find that I often fail in that instance of self-government; not to throw away so much of my time at ——: To set myself in the best manner I can to mortify my ——, which I may call my iniquity; I have it down in my diary, am levelling against it in every fast, at every sacrament, and almost in every prayer; and yet have but imperfectly overcome it. O! for some farther conquest this year. Lord, help me by thy grace! and as I am going to public worship, where I expect to hear a sermon suitable to the occasion, I would endeavour to make a good improvement thereof. Lord, confirm my purposes, strengthen me by thy Spirit, forgive the sins of the last year; may I not bring any of the guilt of them into this? To thee I resign myself, all my powers

and faculties; my time, life, interests, all I have and am; accept me in the beloved.—*Amen, Amen**.

Upon returning home from a journey.

Specimen XVI. As I have met with a variety of providences in this journey, in which I have spent so many weeks; I desire now to review some of the more remarkable occurrences of it, and address myself to God with suitable acknowledgments.

A great many mercies I have to reflect upon, besides such as may be reckoned more *common*, which yet I would not overlook (as continued health, safety, success in my affairs, the enjoyment of my friends and the like). There are some special favours that call for more particular remarks: As my deliverance at —— bridge: The bridge was, a great part of it, under water by a flood: The horse slipt off the causeway, that led to it, with his hinder feet, but so recovered himself by a sudden spring, that I know not which surprised me most, the greatness of my danger, or of my deliverance. I was ready

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* I would have given more examples to the same purpose, but for fear of being tedious. I design this to recommend such exercises, and as a specimen of them: Though every one must consider his own case, and vary his confessions, thanksgivings, and resolutions accordingly. I promise myself no truly serious Christian, that is in earnest in religion, will object against this as a needless labour. How much more pains doth the merchant take in matters of far less importance, in posting his books, and settling his accounts, and often at this time of the year? And must the children of this world, in every thing, shame the children of light?

to think I had help from an invisible hand, and could not but reflect, with pleasure and gratitude, upon that of the psalmist: *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*, Psal. xci. 11, 12. Blessed be God for the ministry of these benign, good spirits. How many kind offices do they do us, that we are not aware of? unworthy I am of such attendance; but great is the condescension of God to poor creatures. I remember that morning I was a little more particular than ordinary in my requests (though I do not often, when journeying, omit the matter) for the protection of angels, and had in the morning before I rose, some agreeable thoughts on that subject: But whether any one or more of these blessed spirits were present to my assistance or not, the circumstances of my deliverance were such, that I am sure I ought not to overlook the hand of God in it. *He delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling;* may I walk before the Lord in the land of the living!

I hope I received some advantage by the different company and conversation I was engaged in, particularly ———. I find there are some conscientious men, and savoury Christians in most places (though, alas! too thin sown). And I find the same infirmities among other people as among my nearer neighbours: Folly, vanity and sin has overspread the world, and prevail every where; the observation of which, both heretofore and now has been of use to me; as otherwise, so as it helps me to dispense with, and bear the infirmities of those I am more constantly concerned with. Wherever I go, as I

carry my own passions and follies with me, I meet with passions and follies in others, as great as those I complain of at home; nor shall I be free of this exercise, till I get among the good people of heaven———. Lord, fit me for the blessed day. As we are apt to think former times better than these, so to think good men at a distance better than those of our acquaintance; one reason is, the infirmities of the one fall more under our observation than the infirmities of the other. I am thankful for the admonition and help I have had in this journey by the providence, and I hope Spirit of God, in some points of importance, particularly in this.

On Lord's-day, *June* —— I lay at —— I went to public worship; and as I had reason, from the character of the preacher, to expect something entertaining and destructive, I took some notes of the sermon; and hope I shall not soon forget the warm and serious admonition he gave his auditory against loving the world; he described a lover of the world, offered several very pertinent arguments against it. Many things came close to my conscience. When I returned to my inn, I retired into my chamber, and found matter for some serious exercise, in which, if I mistake not, I had the comfortable presence of God. Next Lord's-day I had no opportunity of going to church, unless I spent a good part of the day on horseback, and therefore I rather chose to keep in my inn, and make the best I could of my time in private; for I must own I cannot approve the way of those that make no scruple to travel on the Lord's-day, almost all of it, provided they can get to church any part of it, and hear a sermon, or sleep whilst it is delivered; I am afraid the

business of hearing a sermon at such a place, is mostly a pretence to excuse the true design of travelling, *viz.* to get forward on the journey. I took the opportunity of my retirement that day, to think over the affairs of my journey; spent some time in thanksgiving, confession, petition, and hope my time was not altogether lost. On *Thursday* in the forenoon, in my road between —— having no company, I endeavoured to employ my thoughts upon serious subjects, which God enabled me to do with some profit and comfort. When I came to—— I had the company of——, a relation I had not seen for some time. I found them in very comfortable circumstances, and which not a little pleased me, looking towards heaven, as I hope. Blessed be God for this high instance of his favour; what shall I render? make deeper impressions, *&c.* I am humbled and astonished to think I was no more useful in my converse with them; I still want skill and zeal for such applications to my friends, for their spiritual good, as would well become me. I am often seized with a dumb devil; however, I would hope I was not wholly useless. When I came home, I found all well ———. Thus mercy and goodness still follow me; has done so eminently in this journey; *I will praise thee, O Lord, my God, with all my heart, and will glorify thy name for evermore.*

Some disappointments* met with; particu-

* The various occasions of persons in their journeys, and the different business they are employed in, whether as merchants, ministers, *&c.* together with the great variety there will be in their cases, both with respect to miracles, disappointments, miscarriages and the like, must govern and direct the manner of these serious exercises I am here setting an exam-

larly in my concern with ——— and in ——— many failings and miscarriages I have to bewail. I cannot charge myself with injustice towards my neighbour; with lying, or any other gross sin; but have been far from acting with that circumspection, exactness, and *decorum* that becomes a Christian; there has been much levity and unprofitableness, and often pride and vanity in my converse. I have not watched and kept my garments, but walked naked, and they have seen my shame. I met with some men of loose principles at———, who gave vent to their folly very freely, and foamed out their own shame; but had not presence of mind, and courage enough to rebuke them, and plead the cause of religion as I ought; and, alas! how little skill at best have I for such service: I took too much liberty at my inn at———, and went to bed with little acknowledgment of God. My thoughts, when riding alone, were frequently vain, idle, and sometimes worse. I spent the greatest part of one Lord's-day foolishly and sinfully in company———. Forgive, Lord, my manifold iniquity. I bless thee, things are no worse with me, and for the favours of thy providence towards me through this journey. O!

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ple of. I do not expect the company of any of the scorners, so far through this work; but if any of these men of sense and wit (as they think themselves) should happen to take up this book instead of the *Fortunate Mistress*, &c. and lighting upon these or the like passages, should, as their manner is, cry out of *cant*, I would desire them not to speak evil of things they know not. The Christian, however, is so much convinced of his duty herein (*acknowledging God in all his ways*) and finds so much comfort in such a course that I am persuaded he will not be laughed out of it. If this be to be enthusiastic and vile, he will resolve to be more vile still.

pardon the sins of it. I purpose to act with more caution for the future; particularly when I have any journey before me of importance, I purpose to spend some time in prayer before I set out, with reference to it, bespeaking the divine preservation, presence, conduct and blessing. I purpose with more care to guard my thoughts when travelling alone. There is some truth in that saying, that *every man alone is* aut angelus, aut diabolus, *either an angel or a devil.* I do not expect the entertainment pious Mr. *Flavel* had in his journey; but if my mind be furnished for such work, and bent that way, I may have (many a one has had) no small refreshment and real intercourse with God on these occasions, reflecting on the providences of God towards me, his kind and gracious dispensations, on my own sins and wants, sending up frequent devout petitions to heaven, praising God, resigning myself to him, my concerns, my family, and special affairs in view, and that are depending, &c. Lord, help me thus to employ myself, and improve my time in journeying, as I have opportunity. When I come to my inn, every night, I would immediately, or soon retire and acknowledge God, in the safety, comforts and several occurrences of the day. I would endeavour to be cheerful and pleasant in company, though with caution, watching against lightness, raillery, bearing hard upon any, and making sport with their weaknesses, against vanity, romancing, lying, still setting the Lord before me, and carrying my religion along with me, in my diversions as well as business. When I return home, I would always review my journey, not only my expences and my accounts, but my sins and my mercies;

bring these into my oratory, and give them a proper place in my devotion. O! for deeper impressions from above. Lord, renew a right Spirit within me.

On the Death of several intimate Friends.

Specimen XVII. SEVERAL of my particular acquaintance, and some of my very intimate friends, have lately been removed into the other world, and more than one or two of them by a very short sickness. It would argue strange stupidity in me, to let all this pass without any serious thoughts, though, alas! they have been too few, and too cold. Among other things I cannot but reflect on the distinguishing providence of God in sparing me. It is no doubt a mercy, and demands my acknowledgment, though methinks there is something humbling in it: They are safe landed, got home, advanced to the higher services and enjoyments of the church above, and I am left behind in a world of sin and sorrow, temptations and snares. Had I been as well prepared as they, surely my preferment had not been delayed. I know we are apt to speak, even of such persons as I have my eye upon, with a sort of lamentation, as if this world was their only happiness, and death their undoing. He is dead, POOR MAN; a language and stile, I confess, I do not understand in the mouth of a Christian. How odd would it look to say in earnest and with an air of seriousness and concern, of the mariner that has been long tossed at sea, and but narrowly escaped being shipwrecked, *poor man*, he is got

into his harbour. Religion teaches us otherwise, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord:* And thus I ought to think of my friends; I cannot question it concerning some of them: They are entered into rest, *have fought the good fight, finished their course*, and are now triumphing with their Lord, whilst I am yet in the field of battle, sowing in tears. However, there is this mercy in it, and I would chiefly on this account esteem the continuance of life a mercy; *that I have a longer seed-time*, and more opportunity to prepare for eternity. Help me, Lord, to apply myself with diligence to my proper work, and I desire patiently to wait thy time for my dismission.

Some circumstances in the death of my friends, whom I have followed to the grave within a few months past, particularly the suddenness of it, brought to my mind a question I have heard debated in conversation, and found debated in books, viz. *Whether sudden death* (in the proper sense of the word, as it notes a death without much warning) *be an evil*, and whether it is fit to pray against it? As to which my thoughts are, that it is either desirable or otherwise, according as the state of things are with us. To such as are in a good measure prepared for death, it can never be unseasonable; and often the suddenness of it may be reckoned a felicity to them, especially if the shots of death have been the constant matter of their exercise, as in the case of some very serious persons, and was one of my lately deceased friends; the suddenness of whose death I could not but look upon as a signal favour: They had scarce time to view an enemy, the prospect of which at a distance filled them with terror. They went

through the valley of death, scarce knowing where they were: How often have I seen them in their bondage, crying out: O! how shall I grapple with death? I cannot bear the thoughts of it; whereas death stealing upon them in this manner, they fell by it, without seeing its dart, which they used to foresee with so much dread. *Get thee up*, said God to *Moses*, *to mount Nebo, and die there*, Deut. xxxii. 49, 50. *and there he died according to the word of the Lord*, Deut. xxxiv. 5. The *Rabbins* say, his soul departed with a kiss, or that God took it out of the body with a kiss. He seems to have had an *euthanasie*, a calm easy death, free from the violence of distempers, and the reluctance of his own mind. A sudden death has this advantage in it often; it prevents the many tedious conflicts good men so much feared: They get away without passing through the more solemn forms of dying, and without suffering the fruitless, but troublesome care and endeavours of physicians and friends, to detain them: Nor do they only escape the dread, but in a great measure the pains of dying; I mean those sicknesses, faintings, decays and manifold sorrows; the wearisome nights and days that attend a long illness, gradually introduce death, and are frequently more grievous than death itself: Certainly it is not desirable to languish on a sick bed years or months. Who would not chuse, if it so please God, to pass more immediately from action and service to honour, rather than wear out the poor remainder of a useless life in sighs and groans?

On the other hand, it must be granted that a little warning may be a favour to good men, in some circumstances; as it gives them an opportunity for such services as may yet remain to be

done, or want to be revised, and better done: The setting their house in order, taking a more solemn leave of friends and relations, exercising repentance and other graces, trimming their lamps for the bridegroom's coming, &c. But after all, I desire to be entirely resigned in this matter, leaving myself nothing to chuse, but refer all to the great Lord and Sovereign of life. The only thing I would be concerned about, is that I may not be surprised, but be in a constant readiness, have all things set in order; my house, my heart in order, that no work necessary for a safe and comfortable death may be left undone, that whenever death comes, I may be able to bid it welcome.

And O! that God would help me to make some right improvement of these providences: I think myself many ways a loser by the death of my dear friends; I may also gain by it, if it be not my own fault. In order to which I would endeavour to follow them in my thoughts into the other world: Sometimes I find myself disposed to do so, and ready to wish, O! that I was with them. I have had some hours of comfortable converse with them; but how much better company would they be now, were I fit to be joined to their assembly, and have a place among them! Lord, when shall it be? I would endeavour to copy after them, and learn their excellencies. How charitable and compassionate was good ——! how serious in worship! I remember an hymn she sometimes used when joining in prayer: I have thought of it some scores of times since her death. I could not but look upon it somewhat like the stamp of the foot in music, for keeping the time. How mortified to the world and spiritually minded was

the pious ——! He seemed to have no care but about his soul and eternity: He was so much above the world, that he was almost out of it before he died, and indeed could scarce think or speak of any thing else with pleasure, but heaven, and what concerned the way to it. How useful a man was the judicious Mr. ——! useful in the neighbourhood, and eminently so in the church to which he belonged: He was none of those that minded his own things, with a neglect of the things of Christ: He was a lover of hospitality and of good men; charitable to his enemies, and always faithful and affectionate to his friend. How meek, lowly, broken, and contrite was dear ——! almost always condemning herself, and lying in sackcloth: Every body could see eminent graces in her, but herself. I reckon indeed she suffered some disadvantage from her bodily constitution, which made her state and walk less comfortable; however it was safe, and I observed her latter end was peace, eminently so. Lord, pity a poor creature, vile, worthless, and almost lost to every good work; thus left behind by my friends, every way behind: Behind in a dark sinful world, and behind in attainments, temper, and frame. How unlike am I to thyself! how unlike to some of thy servants! But thou hast the residue of the Spirit: Make me more like thine, and it will be a good evidence I am thine, and shall at last be with them. Help me to keep in mind, and imitate their graces, and to be a follower of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises *.

* Whatever disputes there are about *commemorative* days, days kept in memory of saints departed, whether lawful and

On the several Ages of Life.

I WAS in company the other night, when it was discoursed, what age of life is most desirable? With most, indeed, such a question is easily resolved, who can think of no age but the *vigour of youth*, with any satisfaction. One person was mentioned, who has scarce reached forty, and yet has been heard several times to express his concern that he was so far advanced, and like so soon to leave this *dear world*, or at least suffer an abatement of its pleasures: Nor is this so different from the common sentiments of mankind, as to be thought very peculiar. Alas! *I am on the wrong side* fifty, is a saying, which though sometimes delivered with an air of jesting, has a great deal of the inward sense of the speaker in it: Nothing more terrible to many, to the most, than age, *the devil of old age;* they dread it as misery and undoing. And indeed, was the happiness of the body, or that the body is the instrument and channel of the proper happiness of a reasonable creature, there would be some sense in their resentment, because, as the body grows old, and decays, the pleasures and happiness of it must in course decay also; on which account there cannot be a more deplorable case than that of the poor sensualist, who

Specimen XVIII.

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convenient, I think it past dispute that we ought one way or other to remember them; and the design of this specimen is to invite and divert the reader to one way that here is unexceptionable. We should often think of our serious departed friends, set their example before us, get into their company in the other world; many advantages may accrue to us from thence, and I reckon it especially seasonable when they have newly left us.

knows no life but that of the animal, and consequently, whose happiness must be continued within the narrow bounds of forty or fifty years at the most.

The conversation led me a little to reflect upon this matter, and particularly to consider with myself, what age of life ought to be esteemed by a wise and good man, as most significant and valuable. Life is divided into different periods: We do not come into the world in our full stature and capacity, and die in the same state, but pass through different stages, as infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. Custom and common estimation has taught us thus to distinguish life, and the scripture seems to countenance such a distinction. How to fix the precise limits of these several periods, may not be very easy, nor is it of much consequence. *Infancy* is the first and shortest stage of life: I do not mean in the law sense of the word, according to which all are infants under the age of twenty-one, but in vulgar acceptation; and we may allow to it four or five years. *Childhood* may be extended to about twelve years, at which time, according to the *Jewish* doctors, persons begin to be *sui juris*, capable of making vows and the like. *Youth* reaches to about twenty, and *manhood* to the time when the strength and vigour of nature begins to be impaired, and from thence *old age* creeps on us. Which of these ought to have the preference, is the question; and to be sure *infancy* has no claim to it; the man can scarce then be said to live, though the animal doth. In the next stage reason begins to blossom, and the mind to open, and in the following (youth), the faculties thereof gradually exert themselves: But, how low

our reason! how weak our judgment! *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child*, 1 Cor. xiii. 11. And with how much infirmity, that is, they that have passed through that state, and have put away childish things, know. *Youth* seems to have a little more of the rational in it, but almost infinite are the dangers and follies that attend it: So few get through this stage without falls, ruin, or at least hurt, that no wise man, when he comes to look back upon it, would desire to return into it again. The paths of youth are slippery paths. Whatever young persons think of themselves, of their conduct and measures of acting, their thoughtful solicitous friends cannot but observe them with pity and fear: They are generally exceeding wise, though without all experience, rash in their judgments, peremptory in their resolutions, impetuous in their desires, and eager in their pursuits; so that they do little that will bear the examination of a more mature calm age; much that requires repentance; little that will afford comfort in the review. And often we see such steps then taken as lay the foundation of many sorrows, through the whole after-life. In short, every one that considers the circumstances of this age, must give into *Solomon*'s censure, *Eccles.* xi. 10. *Childhood and youth are vanity.*

The next period, that of *manhood*, reckoning from a little above twenty to fifty, may be thought the best of our time, and it is granted, it has many advantages, but not without many allays. A good part of it is ordinarily spent before we get quit of that foolish dream of an earthly happiness, with which we are so apt to entertain ourselves in our first setting out in the

world. We are busy a great while in trying and proving the fine scenes we had painted in our imaginations; and indeed not so much lay aside our former vanity as turn it towards other objects; for what difference is there between him that dotes upon a bag of money, and him that plays upon an hobby-horse, save that the grown child is more a child? So that upon the whole (a religious bias and temper of mind being supposed, which it must be allowed the former years most fitly serve to introduce), I cannot but reckon the latter stage of manhood, *between fifty and sixty*, preferable to any other; the most important opportunity of life. Youthful heat and fervour begin now to abate: The judgment is ordinarily come to a full maturity: The world has shewn itself an impostor in all its forms. By this time sure, if ever, we shall be convinced, how little it can contribute to our true happiness: Some more eminent degree of mortification, and manifold experience in the several branches of religion may now be expected; so that in this stage the Christian sets out with a greater stock, and richer furniture of knowledge. And on these accounts, as well as many others, I apprehend the common saying exceeding heterodox, that a person is on the wrong side of fifty, when he is turned of it. I should rather call it the *right side*, not only as he is nearer heaven, but as he is in his most improvable age, in the *very prime of life*. And as by the providence of God I am now brought to this period, I would endeavour to take the advantage of it, consider and improve it as my best opportunity for religion and another world. Lord, direct and assist me by thy grace.

In order to it I purpose and would endeavour, (1.) suitably to review the former stages of life, to consider my dangers, mercies, deliverances, and sins. I thank God that I have not religion now to begin; that I have been preserved and kept hitherto. I have taken many false and foolish steps, and have reason to weep over every age. O! how many my miscarriages; but, blessed be God, I have not made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Much has been amiss, and might, I see, have been mended: I desire to be thankful in the mean time things are no worse. It is a pleasure to me to think I am got so far through life, with some comfortable hope of heaven (adored be divine grace). I should be loath to go back again, as meanly as I have acted; unless I was sure to escape the follies I have run into; much less would I desire it for the sake of youthful pleasures and enjoyments: I know by woful experience how vain, deceitful, and treacherous these are, and am thankful I am got so far through them, and delivered from them. I hope I do not look back with regret that they are over, crying out with the poor sensualist, *O that I was young!* I have an higher game, a more noble prize; may I constantly press forward towards it. (2.) I would endeavour to disengage myself from the world, withdraw my affections from it, be getting it out of my hands as much as my circumstances will allow; however out of my heart: I leave others to pursue projects for this world, it becomes me to be taking leave of it, and turning my shots another way. (3.) I purpose to correct, as far as I can, former mistakes; to mark and avoid the rocks I have split upon, or

been in danger of. If I am to learn wisdom and caution by the experience of others (*felix quem faciunt*, &c.) much more by my own. (4.) To look upon this part of life as more especially due to religion. Let my children and juniors mind the world, my care should lie very much another way: Life is short and uncertain; this is the most profitable time of life, *my harvest*. I would be up and doing, and now at last remember *one thing is needful*. (5.) I would take care not to lose my time, either by idleness or impertinency, doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose, but desire to be employed in such things as most directly concern my *high calling*, and will turn to best account at last, not pursuing riches, fame, &c. but attending the proper duties of my station, and the work of religion, that is in the nearest connexion with heaven. Lord, help me to do this; lead me in thy truth, and teach me: Direct me to my duty, assist and succeed me in it; and if I shall live through this period, to old age, may it be a good old age, full of the fruits of righteousness. Save me from the common infirmity and disgrace of old age, *covetousness*. Why should I grasp a shadow that is flying from me? pursue and hug the world so inordinately, when I am just ready to leave it? Nothing more incongruous than this. O! my God, take me under thy conduct, be with me in the remaining part of my journey and warfare, and in this stage particularly: Keep me from the evil of the world, from all apostacy and declining: May my path be as the shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day: May my future time and life be sacred to religion, and wholly

set apart for God, that I may review it with pleasure, and have the comfort of it in old age, on a death-bed, and to eternity. Amen. Amen.

On Human Friendship.

Specimen XIX.

I HAVE lately had occasion to reflect upon the nature, principles, and instability of human friendship. Several incidents have led me to this; and when I consider the matter a little, the grounds upon which the generality proceed in it, the motives to it and measures of it, I cease to wonder that it is so corrupt, so precarious, and so uncomfortable: Not only humour, whim, and fancy, but often downright iniquity is the foundation on which it stands. Persons recommend themselves to others by their vices, as is every day evident in numerous examples: The pimp establishes a friendship with the adulterer, the drunkard with his companion, who loves the sot for no other reason but because he is like himself; and I have often seen the detractor and talebearer get into the very souls of some persons that relish that vicious conversation, and secure an interest with them, which no real goodness could hope to do: And how great a stroke have sycophants, the obsequious and fawners, with mankind? They are aware of the blind side of their neighbours, and by soothing their natural passions, pride, self-love, and vanity, make them their property, and carry all before them. In the mean time, how rare is virtuous friendship, founded upon real merit and goodness, cultivated and improved according to the rules of religion, and for the purposes of it! that is conducted according to the laws,

and in subserviency to the ends of true friendship! Or if there seem to be something of this in the beginning of the friendship, how nice and fickle is it! Sometimes our friends will desert us upon a very slight occasion, and which was really none, had it been rightly understood; sometimes out of mere humour, we can never learn why; sometimes even when we are contriving the best offices of kindness towards them we are capable of; sometimes when we are pursuing our duty and acting in that pursuit, to the conviction of their conscience, as well as with the testimony of our own: Yet if the thing be not popular, if it fall under the censure of others, if it interfere with any little interest or passion of theirs, or the methods of acting be not agreeable to their gust, you are given up, there is an end of the friendship, and it may be not only coolness, but enmity succeeds.

O my soul! learn wisdom; endeavour for some instruction by such instances as these, so frequently displayed, and even just now, before thy eyes, Lord, be my teacher. I would endeavour among other things, as the improvement of such providences: (1.) To lessen, and in a great measure withdraw my dependence on men: May I cease from man! *all men are liars*, (i. e.) defectible, changeable, and may deceive. (2.) To be steady and faithful in my friendship; this I should learn from the resentment I feel in myself of the treachery and unsteadiness I have experienced. (3.) To bear, with as much calmness as I can, disappointments of this kind. Such is the frailty of human nature, that I must expect them, and therefore should provide for them. (4.) To make God my friend, and he will never deceive nor forsake me. (5.) To se-

cure the testimony, and rejoicing of my own conscience: And in order to this, (6.) To keep on in the way of duty, with a generous neglect of the opinions, favour, and frowns of others. *Amicus Plato*, &c. Truth and duty should be dearer to me than the applauses of all the world. (7.) To wait for the state of perfect love and friendship above. Lord, assist me herein. May I expect less from the creature, more from thyself: I am willing my encouragements to, and in my duty, should be all derived from heaven; thy acceptance, thy smiles are enough: If my friends approve me, and are with me in the way of my duty, it is well, I desire to be thankful; but if not, I desire to be easy; my eye is to the hand of my Master. *There is none on earth I desire besides thee.* In thy favour is life, and thy loving kindness is better than life.

On a special Instance of Diligence in Worldly Affairs.

Specimen XX.

THE other night, the practice of a gentleman (pretty remarkable for raising a large estate by his own industry) was mentioned in company where I was; and I had heard it mentioned some time before, not without such praises as are generally bestowed on them that do well for themselves. He would be up, and in his counting-house by three o'clock in the morning, and abroad about his business by six; and this not accidentally and occasionally, but it was his practice, even on the coldest day in winter. When I heard this, I must confess, it strangely lessened the value of such industry with me, to consider *that it respected the things of this world*

only, things of so little importance and duration: Had this labour not been about the *meat that perisheth*, but that *which endureth to everlasting life*, the affairs of the soul and eternity, it had been something; but as it was, methinks, it is *magno conatu nihil agere*, to take a great deal of pains about nothing,

But, O my soul, canst thou not learn something from hence? How do such examples reproach thy coolness, sloth, and indifferency in the high and momentous concerns of another world! It is said of a good man, that when he observed an immodest woman spend several hours in decking and preparing herself to please a wanton lover, he wept on the reflection, *that it was more than he had done that day to please God, and adorn his soul.* Lord, quicken me to my duty. Shall men of business be thus resolute in pursuit of this world, deny their ease, and abridge their rest, to settle their accounts, and manage their trades; and shall I find no zeal in the work of heaven, when I have infinitely greater things in view, the true riches, the gold tried in the fire? For not only the after recompence, the eternal weight of glory, the prize of the *high calling*, surpasses all their gain, but even the present improvement of one grace, is exceedingly preferable to it: *The trial of faith is much more precious than of gold that perisheth*, 1 Pet. i. 7. And what shall I say of communion and intercourse with God? Is not this a more excellent, delightful, and profitable employment? Shall the merchant leave his bed so early, for the low dull work of per centing, *&c.* and shall I redeem no minutes from sleep, diversions, company, *&c.* for converse with heaven! Think, O my soul, of the example before

thee; think of the example of thy Lord and Master, who rose up a great while before day, and *departed into a secret place and prayed*, Mark i. 35. At three o'clock in the morning in the counting-house! But when in the oratory? Lord, make me as wise for my soul as others are for their bodies; and when the accounts come to be cast up at last, I know who will be richest.

On the Failings of good Men, and the Resentment we are apt to have of them.

Specimen XXI.

AMONG the many exercises and trials that attend us through this state of imperfection, sin, and vanity, the failings of those I converse with, are not the least; and methinks I find a greater sense of these, and myself more aggrieved by them than formerly, or indeed than ever before*, whether this be owing to them or myself: That they are more apt to shew their faults, or I more apt to espy them, is a question I should inquire into. It would be vanity in me to make it an argument of greater virtue, as proceeding from more experience, a better taste of things, and a quicker apprehension of what is good, just, and right, and the contrary. Though I

* I am supposing this to be the present case of the Christian, whom I personate in the vindication; and as I apprehend it would be of singular use for serious persons to bring their particular cases, temptations, trials, and the more instructive occurrences in Providence into their oratories and devotion, state and argue them with their own souls and before God, I would accordingly recommend the practice, and have given some examples of what I intend.

doubt not this is sometimes the case, verifying that of *Solomon*, Eccles. i. 18. *In much wisdom there is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.* But whatever be the occasion, the exercise is real, and the burden of it sometimes so great, that I think myself obliged to consider the matter, and endeavour my own relief.

And may I not be mistaken, and carry things too far in my censure of others? Probably what I esteem a fault, is none, or at least they do not apprehend it to be so: If it be a fault, they may not often be guilty of it: I may take them at a disadvantage, and see them in one of their worst moods. That way of acting and speaking, that is so offensive to me, may not be their manner. I do not know the resentment they have of it themselves: I see the folly, but do not see the censure of it afterwards; do not see them on their knees or faces, bewailing their infirmity, and condemning themselves with more severity than I condemn them. In short, we are very incompetent judges of the failings of others, as not being able to take in all that belongs to the case; and therefore should not be ready and forward to pass a judgment, especially an uncharitable one: And besides, if they have their infirmities, have they not their excellencies too, their bright as well as dark side? And why should I not look at the one as well as the other? Have not I infirmities as well as others? Am I not conscious of as bad things in myself, as I complain so much of in others, if not in the same, yet in a different kind? And why so indulgent of my own infirmities, and so severe towards those of other people; I expected more prudence, wisdom, gentleness, meekness,

charity, usefulness from such and such; more reverence in devotion, a greater *decorum* in their conduct; but how defective am I in these and many other things myself! O my soul! take thyself to task here; *first cast the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see more clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye.*

Nor may I be sufficiently apprized of it, how much real infirmity and evil there is in this temper of mine, *resenting so deeply the infirmities of others.* The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, *without partiality* (ἀδιάκριτος); the word may be as well rendered, not censorious, without critical severity in judging others, as a great man * observes, who adds, "They that have "most of this wisdom, are least rigid to those "that have less of it: I know no better evi- "dence of the strength of grace, than to bear "much with those that are weak in it." To the same purpose another devout † person, "It "is often our own imperfections, that makes "us reprove the imperfections of others: It is "a sharp-sighted penetrating self-love, which "never pardons the self-love of another. The "passions of other men seem infinitely ridicu- "lous, and insupportable to him that is given "up to his own. Divine charity makes great "allowances for the weaknesses of others, bears "with them, and treats them with gentleness "and condescension. It is never overhasty in "its proceedings. The less we have of self- "love, the more easily we accommodate our- "selves to the imperfections of others, in order "to cure them patiently. We never make an "incision, without putting a great deal of balm

* Bishop *Leighton* Serm. 1. p. 5.

† Life of Mons. *de Fenelon*, p. 292.

" upon the wound." And elsewhere (in his dialogues of the dead) " A man of imperfect " virtue sinks under the weight of others im- " perfections: Such a one still loves himself " too much to bear with what is contrary to his " own taste, and to his own maxims. Self- " love will no more endure to be contradicted " by vice, than by virtue. Imperfect virtue " is captious, censorious, sour, severe and im- " placable. Perfect virtue is always uniform, " meek, affable and compassionate. It takes " every burden upon itself, and thinks of no- " thing but doing good. It is this principle of " disinterestedness, in regard to ourselves, and " of compassion for others, which is the true " bond of society." How just are these sentiments, and how much am I condemned by them? O! for more divine love and charity: The world would thereupon soon appear another thing to me. I see the ground of my quarrel with others is very much in my own breast; I love myself, and not them, and that makes me uneasy. Had I more of the gentleness, goodness and kindness of the gospel, I should see less of the infirmities of other men; or however behold them with another eye, cast a vail over them, and turn my resentments chiefly against myself.

O! my God, form my heart to a correspondence with the state of things with me. I am compassed about with infirmities, my own, and those of others, and must expect the exercise and trial of them. The world lieth in wickedness, and as for the church, it is a sort of an hospital, where all are patients, and even the best are but under cure. May I not cherish my own infirmities, nor be unduly affected with

the infirmities of my neighbours. Two or three things I would propose to myself, and endeavour. I would not pass over the sins and follies of others without any resentment: No charity obliges to this; there is neither duty nor safety in it. *Lot* was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: Rivers of tears ran down the Psalmist's eyes, because men kept not God's law. When the *apostle* speaks of some in his days, who were *enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end was destruction, whose God was their belly, whose glory was in their shame, who minded earthly things*, he could not mention them without weeping, *Phil.* iii. 18, 19. I am not to deny or palliate the sins of bad men, or the infirmities of good men, but maintain a just sense and just abhorrence of them. I purpose and would endeavour to withstand the infirmities I observe in others: nor to think the better of sin and folly, because of the character of the person in whom it is found; to put as favourable a construction as I can upon the actions of others; to bear their real and certain infirmities with patience; to endeavour to help and heal the infirmities of my brethren, and to wait for the state above, where there shall be none of these blemishes and grievances, and where all imperfection shall be done away. Lord, afford me thy teaching, the influences of thy Spirit, correcting my heart and frame, and fortifying the mind. May I in patience possess my soul, converse with mankind according to the laws of charity, kindness and love, and be concerned rather to act the part of a *physician*, than a *censor* among them.

Upon the first audience of the Russian *Extraordinary Ambassador.* (*From Mr.* Boyle's *occasional Reflections*, p. 337.)

Specimen XXII. "I SEE the general expectation, that there "will be here this night a magnificent appear- "ance, has produced one: And as it often hap- "pens in public shews, that the chief part of "them is made by those that come to see "them; so here, besides those whose duty "obliges them to attend at the solemnity, there "is a greater concourse of fine people, of either "sex, than any thing of this nature has for "many years occasioned; and if the ambas- "sador be what a man of his employment "should be, and what some say he is, a person "acquainted with the manners of men, he can- "not but know, that we, as other nations, "value our own fashions enough, to look upon "men disguised by the *Russian* dress as little "better than anticks, if not as some new kind "of northern animals: But for all this gazing "throng of gaudy spectators, that were able "to put an ordinary stranger out of counte- "nance, to appear in an habit differing from "theirs, the ambassador, and those that come "along with him, think not fit to decline the "*Russian* habit and ceremony for the *English*, "but keep to the *ceremonies* used in *Russia*, as "strictly as if the monarch of it, that sent "them thither, saw them here: And what- "ever those may think of the ambassador, that "are wont to estimate men by the fashionable- "ness of their cloaths, yet the wiser and more

" intelligent do not blame him for refusing to
" disparage the fashions of his own people, by
" appearing ashamed of them, but do rather
" think it prudent in him, to prefer the pleas-
" ing his master and his own countrymen, be-
" fore the gratifying of strangers; since it is
" not here, but at home, that he expects the
" recompence of his behaviour and embassy.

" Thus when a christian, who belongs to a
" celestial king, and whose *citizenship is in*
" *heaven*, being but stranger on earth, con-
" verses among the men of the world, though
" in matters indifferent, there is often required,
" by prudence, as much of compliance as is
" allowed by innocence; yet when there hap-
" pens an occasion wherein he cannot comply
" with the depraved customs of those among
" whom he lives, without disobeying him for
" whom he lives, and whose servant he is;
" or doing something that would derogate from
" the dignity of a person related to such a
" master; he will then less consider what may
" be thought of him by a multitude, than
" what account he is to render to him, who
" has forbidden men to follow a multitude to
" do evil. And as he knows his reward would
" be much less than he reckons upon, if it
" were a thing to be received on earth, not
" in heaven: So how strange and unfashion-
" able soever his conformity to the orders of
" his sovereign may appear, he chuses rather
" to displease men than God, and acts as both
" *seeing* and being seen by him that *is invisible*."

Upon the sight of the effects of a burning-glass. (From Mr. Boyle, ibid. p. 399.)

Specimen XIII. "IT is a fault incident to many good men to "be too much indisposed to entertain the pre-"cepts of virtue as such excellent things de-"serve, in case those that teach them do not "practice them. There are too many that "do not think themselves obliged to take even "the wholsomest advice from those, whom "they see more careful to give it to others, "than to follow it themselves; and some of "them are so nice, that they will scarce read "a book of devotion, unless it come, like that "*St. John* eat in the apocalypse, *from the hand* "*of an angel.* But for my part, though I hope "I both value and desire religious preachers "as much as the rest of my brethren, yet I "think it would be much to the injury both "of scripture and reason, if we should suffer "the personal faults of men to keep them "from doing that good their nature fits them "for. The etymology of the gospel, import-"ing its being welcome news, it is pity any "one that teaches it, should not have a title "to the character *David* gave *Ahimaaz*, of "whom he said, *he is a good man and brings* "*good tidings;* but my desire of piety in a "preacher is more for others sake than mine; "for I know not why truth, which is an intel-"lectual thing, should lose its nature by any "moral viciousness in the proposer. I know "there is something extraordinary in the case "of *Noah*, who awoke from his wine, and im-"mediately prophesied; and yet the event

" verified his predictions. Our Saviour in-
" structing his disciples about the scribes and
" pharisees, who sat in *Moses*'s chair, at the
" same time commands them to conform to their
" doctrine, when he forbids them to imitate
" their example. The wise men did not the
" less find Christ at *Bethlehem*, though the
" priests and pharisees sent them without ac-
" companying them thither; and the *Assyrian*
" general was cured of his leprosy, by fol-
" lowing the prophet's prescription, conveyed
" him by that *Gehazi*, who, by his unworthy
" carriage in that business, transplanted (if I
" may so speak) that foul disease into himself
" and posterity. I will therefore consider ser-
" mons more than preachers: For as in a burn-
" ing glass, though the sun beams do but illus-
" trate, not heat in their passage, they may
" yet, by its assistance, kindle subjects that are
" more disposed to receive their action; so
" those very truths and notions of a learned
" preacher, which do but enlighten him, may
" inflame his hearers, and kindle in their
" hearts the love of God: And as if a per-
" fume be set on fire by the beams projected
" through a burning glass (which they do not
" so much as warm in their passage) the scent
" is no less odoriferous and grateful, than if it
" had been produced by an actually burning
" coal; so neither is that devotion, which is
" kindled by the eloquence of an indevout
" preacher, any whit the less acceptable to
" God, for their not being themselves affected
" with the zeal they beget in others: And what
" the books of Kings relates of *Elisha*'s bones,
" contains a far greater miracle in the histo-
" rical, than in the allegorical sense, in which

" it is no such wonder to see a man raised to " life by a * dead prophet."

Upon the shop of a deformed painter, rarely well stored with beautiful pictures.—(Ibid. p. 405.)

Specimen XXIV. " HERE is a shop so well furnished, that " beauty seems to have assumed all the variety " of features and complexions she can be dressed " in; but though the limner has drawn some " pieces so like, that an actual confronting the " artist's work and nature's would scarce dis- " tinguish them (since the former would ap- " pear to differ from the latter but in that " silence, which the latter's admiration to see " themselves so perfectly represented, would " impose); yet is the painter himself so de- " formed a creature, that he might draw a " lovelier face, even than any here, by draw- " ing one perfectly unlike his own. Alas! this " discloseth the difference there is betwixt be- " ing able to write fine characters of virtue, " and the possessing it. How ridiculous should

* I reckon the admonition here given of exceeding importance, though such is the infirmity of mankind, that few, I am afraid, are able to receive it. The author must not be understood as if serious and devout preachers were not most desirable; and no question such are generally most successful. The most piercing oratory is that which comes from a warm heart, under deep impressions of God and the Divine Spirit; nor can I think the blessing of heaven often attends the administrations of loose vicious carnal men, who neither believe, feel nor care what they speak.

" I esteem this limner, if, with all his ugliness, " he should esteem himself handsome, because " his pencil can draw faces that are so: As " absurd were it in us to grow proud of our " devout composures, and fancy piety ours, " because our discourses can possibly enamour " others of it. The devil doth sometimes suffer " us unmolestedly to write well, if he can but " persuade us we need do no more; and that " good pens may dispense us from good ac- " tions. Our paper wars against vices are of- " tentimes like *Alexander*'s against the neigh- " bouring nations, not out of hatred, but " glory; not to extirpate, but to conquer them, " and manifest to the world the sufficiency of " our parts by a victory; after which we often " treat the vanquished enemy with greater " courtesy than those whose quarrel we un- " dertook. Discourses against vice may as " well be indited by vanity as by zeal, and " meant to express wit, not piety; and if (as " it chanceth but too frequently) we grow " proud of them, we do, like witches, turning " exorcists, only comply with satan to cast out " the devil. Indeed it often happens to us, " as it once did to *Gideon* (*Jud.* viii. 27. &c.) " who of the spoils of God's and *Israel*'s con- " quered enemies made an idol, which proved " in the end his and his house's snare. It was " a most destructive check and divine admo- " nition that our Saviour gave his apostles, " when in the account they brought him of " their embassy, they joyfully related their " exercised power of dispossessing devils: Not- " withstanding, answered Christ, *in this rejoice* " *not, that spirits are subject to you, but rather* " *rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

" In effect, though *Judas* was one of the per-
" sons invested with this miraculous power of
" casting devils out of others, yet we read
" that *satan* entered into him, and that it had
" been good for him that he had never been
" born. And though, as *Solomon* tells us, *he*
" *that winneth souls is wise*, yet it is he only
" that shall do, as well as teach the command-
" ments, that shall be called great in the king-
" dom of heaven, *Mat.* v. 19. The true
" Christian should be willing to impart any use-
" ful discoveries that God shall please to vouch-
" safe him; but he will ever consider the most
" taking notions he can form of virtue, more
" as engagements to it, than arguments of it:
" And since there is not any thing in which
" charity ought more to begin at home, than
" in devout instruction, he will endeavour to
" make himself as much piety's votary as advo-
" cates to imitate those truly wise men, that as
" they informed those of *Jerusalem* of the star
" they had seen in the *East*, did themselves
" follow it, till it brought them to Christ; to
" entitle himself to that of our Saviour (*Luke*
" vi. 45.) *A good man out of the good treasure of*
" *his heart bringeth forth good things;* and
" (finally) to take his celebration of virtue from
" his experience, not his fancy, as nurses first
" feed themselves to nourish their sucking in-
" fants, to whom they give no meat, which they
" have not in their own breasts first digested
" into milk; lest (like the carpenters that toiled
" to build the ark to save *Noah* from the deluge
" themselves perished in) *when he has preached*
" *to others, himself should prove a castaway.*"

I have now finished the examples; several have been offered of every kind; the reader

will think, I am afraid, far more than sufficient: And indeed they are more, not only than I designed, but than I am pleased with, upon the review. All I have to say as an apology is, that several of the subjects, and I hope several thoughts upon them, will be of use to some, who may read them for their instruction, if not for their imitation in the like exercises: Nor may it be amiss for persons less capable of thinking and composing for themselves, to turn to such of these specimens, as they find agreeable to their circumstances, making the changes and alterations their case may require. After all, those that do not need them, or like them, may pass them over, and there is no hurt done.

I reckon it best ordinarily to receive the meditation: Not but that reflections may be made *occasionally*, without the labour of writing, or any special care in ranging and disposing the thoughts in a proper method: And it is no small advantage that will attend these more transient exercises, as they employ and improve the mind, bring in instruction from a variety of subjects that occur, excite devotion, help to beget and cherish a spiritual frame. But the kind of meditation I am now recommending, will require a little more pains, and I think, should for the most part, at least, be written. What are the *Psalms*, but a collection of divine meditations, upon various occasions, answerable to the circumstances that *David* and others (the penmen of them) were in? It is granted they had extraordinary assistance; but that should be no objection against other good men attempting the best they can in the same way. And as it is evident most of the Psalms are *occasional*

meditations, in which the composers had special reference to their own case, and took rise from thence; we should, methinks, look upon their practice as an example to us, and set it before us for our encouragement and imitation.

Instances of extemporary thoughts on reading.

But though the meditation may be wrote, and ordinarily should, it need not be long, nor need we be solicitous about method, style, and other regularities; a few, *even extemporary*, thoughts may sometimes be highly useful———For instance: This day I read the life of young Mr. ———. How excellent a Christian was he at 25? How poor and sorry a creature am I at 50? I cannot but remark a few things concerning him, well worthy of my constant imitation; as (1.) His victory over his passions; his meekness, his charity, and forgiving temper, *page*—— (2.) His prayerfulness, *page*—— (3.) His contempt of the world, *page*—— (4.) His careful improvement of time, *page*—— (5.) The mighty reverence he always expressed for divine things, not only when in worship, but in common conversation, *page*—— (6.) His readiness and willingness to die, *page*——. O! how far am I left behind by many that set out after me in religion? What have I been doing all this while? Like the door upon the hinges, running the round of duties in a dull, formal manner! Lord, look down upon me in mercy; pour out of thy spirit upon me: It becomes me to make some serious resolutions on this occasion; particularly I purpose (1.)—— (2.) *&c.*

Extemporary thoughts on company.

June——— A few days ago I fell into company with some gentlemen, particularly, Sir *Elymas*—— and ——*Spermologus*. They presently began to cry out of priestcraft, and rail at the clergy, making them all a pack of vil-

lains, that only pretended religion to cloak their pride, domineering spirit, and worldly interest. One of them seemed to make some expressions in behalf of a few modest and honest men, he supposed, there might be among them. Another replied, after a profane preface; *never a barrel the better herring*. I hate priests of all religions. A third, that would take it ill not to be thought the wisest man in company, run out into a discourse about the intolerable abuses the common people had suffered, and every where still suffer, by means of these impostors, who had turned religion into mystery and nonsense. Do you ever hear these fellows prate, saith he? I am forced, I own, to go hear them sometimes; but I always relieve myself as soon as I can, by falling asleep. This was followed with an high *encomium* upon natural religion, not without some bold and rude reflections on the holy scriptures. I must confess, I was a little surprised with the discourse, having never met with such insolence before, though I have often heard of the like before from others. I thank God I am not at all staggered with such weak and impotent attacks as these; which I cannot but look upon as the raving of men out of their wits, and the last efforts of libertines, to get rid of a book that, it may be, has a little hampered them, and been troublesome to them in the pursuit of their lusts. I hope I am too well established in the belief of the Bible (upon a careful examination of the strong evidence, which recommends it to my faith) to be moved with a few flirts of wit: I am satisfied the main reason why such sparks as these find fault with the Bible is, because it finds so much fault with them: Did they but desire it was true, and

would they be pleased to have it proved true, the work was half done with them; they would soon get above their prejudices, and see cause to think it true. Nor can I help suspecting their pretended zeal for natural religion to be a sham. They cry up that, not that they value it, or live up to its rules; for then they could not despise the Bible, where it appears in its greatest lustre and glory; but because they can shape and bend it (having got quit of the Bible) according to their own minds, *i. e.* their passions and inclinations. Natural religion with them, is just what suits their natures; and it is an admirable scheme they form of it: They soon come to think God is altogether such a one as themselves (*Psal.* l. 21.); that every thing is lawful they desire should be so; that sure *God will not damn a man for taking a little pleasure out of the way;* that he has not given men such strong inclinations to torment them, as would be the consequence, if they might not gratify them. Here the Bible stands before them with a drawn sword, and rises up against them with full light and the highest authority; and hence their quarrel with it, and in a great measure with the preachers of it. O my soul! bless God that has delivered thee from the delusions of these unhappy men, that has kept thee out of the chair of the scorner. Thou needest no more to convince thee of the excellency of the Bible, than a serious view of the state of those that want it. Pity these poor creatures; their case is deplorable: And indeed their sin seems to come nearest to that against the Holy Ghost of any we are now capable of committing. But I leave them in the hands of God, and recommend them to his mercy———.

June——— I lately heard of the death of pious Mr.———. He was a person of many and great excellencies. I desire to be sensible of the loss I, and indeed the church of God, has sustained by his removal. Among many other things in him, exceeding worthy of imitation, I would never forget these two. I observed that in public prayer he generally kept his handkerchief close upon his face all the time; which served both to cover it and to dry up his tears, which I have reason to think were not uncommon in his devotion. And how serious and solemn an air appeared in his countenance afterwards? He did not sleep away the prayer, nor suffer his eyes to wander about through the congregation. An useful admonition this, which it concerns me to attend to. Another thing in my friend well worthy of my remembrance, was his practice of keeping a secret monthly fast, in which he was constant and serious, and which I have reason to suppose was intended by him, not so much to keep under the body, and subdue exorbitant desires, lusts, and passions, (on which account, it may be, he had less occasion than many others for such a discipline) as to improve his devotion, and wind up his heart and affections as near heaven as he could. A fast day with him, was a day of eminent communion with God; not merely, or chiefly, a day of humiliation or tears, but, as I apprehend his case to have been, at least sometimes, a day of spiritual joy and triumph. Happy souls who are often thus employed; *in whose heart are the ways of God!* May I not only admire, but imitate such excellencies; and by such vigorous efforts and essays in the divine life, get more

above the world, the body, and animal life, and foretaste the life to come.

I lately light upon the Life of *Mons. de Fenelon*, Archbishop of *Cambray*: Several things I find in it which, methinks, shew a Christian grandeur and elevation of mind above what is common. I was surprised, I confess, to find such a man so wofully enslaved to church power and authority, as to sacrifice his reason and understanding to the dictates of the Pope. But how hard is it to throw off inveterate prejudices, and the principles of education? In the mean time there seems an ingenuity and honesty even in this part of his conduct, that gives an honourable idea of the person, allowance being made of his prepossession, and the notions he was bred up in. As they believe the infallibility of the church and Pope, they must, in consequence, believe the decisions that come from thence are sacred and divine; accordingly a full submission is due. This sense he himself had of the matter. "My submission," saith
* P. 124. he,* "was not a stroke of policy, nor a silence "in respect to men, but an inferior act of obe- "dience paid to God alone. According to "Catholic principles, I looked upon the judg- "ment of my superiors as an echo of the Su- "preme will. I did not stop to consider the "prejudices and the disputes which preceded "my condemnation. I heard God speaking as "to *Job*, out of the midst of the whirlwind, and "say to me, *Who is this that darkeneth counsel "by words without knowledge?* and I answered "him from the bottom of my heart; *since I "have spoken unadvisedly, what can I answer? I "will lay my hand upon my mouth.*" And
† P. 158. again, "† I would rather die, than directly or

" indirectly defend a book which I have con-
" demned without restriction, in the sincerity
" of my heart, from a principle of docility and
" submission to the Holy See." And may not this instance of absolute resignation to the *pretended* head of the church, admonish me concerning my duty to the *true head?* There was no prejudice or passion in his decisions; his doctrines, rules, laws, censures, all are pure, divine, without mixture of error and infirmity: I know God has spoken by the Lord Jesus; as for this man (the Pope) I know not whence he is. O! for a true docility to my great Lord and master! May I bow my understanding to his authority. I may, and should use it to find out the meaning of his doctrines and laws, but must not set it up in opposition thereto. If my great Master has said it, has taught it, or commanded it, it is enough; I would lay aside all cavils, resign, submit, obey entirely and without reserve.

How many fine strokes of piety and devotion do I here meet with, among some that I cannot so well understand nor digest? I would particularly remark what occurs* (vol. 1. p. 302, 303.) I am

* I have inserted the passages in those pages before, and mention them here as proper to be brought into this kind of *extempore* meditation. Any thing we meet with in books, in sermons, in conversation, that is instructive, may afford a fit subject for meditation: And I reckon it would be well worth while for such persons, as are intent upon improvement in religion, to converse with the Lives of eminent men, and to collect out of them their several excellencies, and all such instances of more sublime virtue, piety, and devotion, as occur there. These they would do well to take down in writing, often consult, and make use of in meditation; to incite to which was one reason of my mentioning the Lives in the examples above.

sensible I may borrow hints from thence very much to my advantage; and I would be the more concerned to do so, in regard they are so suitable to my case, and proper to afford me relief under my present infirmity. O! may I be always open to conviction, and to reproof; be ready to receive the precepts of wisdom and virtue wherever I meet with them. Lord, be my instructor; and may the inspiration of the Almighty give me understanding.

Thus may the Christian employ himself in a sort of *extempore meditation*, upon any subject he pleaseth, and that providence lays before him. The advantages of such a method of devotion are not few, nor small. But I had rather the reader would try the course prescribed, and prove by his own experience what they are, than receive the account from any representation I can make of them. And indeed I have spent so much time upon this head already, that I must not farther enlarge.

SECT. XI.

Of Self-Examination; which is considered more at large, and as part of the daily Exercise of a Christian in his Oratory or Closet, with Motives and Directions.

3dly. ANOTHER part of our work and employment in the Oratory is *Self-Examination*; which I am now to give an account of. I have drawn out the discourse on the two former

heads, especially on meditation, to so great a length, that I must be forced to contract what remains, and reduce it within as narrow limits as I can, so as to avoid obscurity. Some readers will more readily excuse me, when they consider that the subject now before me, and that of prayer, which is to follow, not only find a place in almost every book of devotion, but almost fill it; whilst the other particulars, especially meditation, are but rarely touched, and I think not at all, in the method I have pursued; so that I am ready to hope this will be some apology, both for my prolixity in the one, and brevity in the other. And if any shall complain of a defect in this part of the discourse, (on the head of examination) perhaps he may afterwards supply it, if I shall have an opportunity of performing what was proposed, but must at present be omitted, *viz.* an account of the *extraordinary* duties of the closet; as on days of fasting and thanksgiving. When I shall endeavour some help to the serious Christian, how to form and keep his duty, and how to make use of it in his daily course; and especially on the occasions mentioned, *Days of solemn thanksgiving and fasting*. On these occasions a more close examination of ourselves is necessary; and therefore hither I refer the fuller discussion of the point. And that the Christian may proceed with more clearness and ease in his work (examining heart and life) I propose, if God please to favour the design, a scheme of Christian virtues, graces, and duties, as laid down in the Bible; collecting such texts as concern the government and due ordering of our thoughts, desires, affections, passions, and actions, with the sins and vices contrary thereto. The *scripture*

is profitable for correction, 2 Tim. iii. 16. It is a complete rule of holy living; it gives laws to the whole man, and points out all our moral errors and mistakes. We *cleanse* our *way by taking heed thereto according to the word*, Psal. cxix. 9. And I reckon it would be of eminent service towards our *correction* and reforming, and contribute not a little to render examination more successful, to have the particulars of the divine rule brought under different heads, and set before us in an ordinarily *paradigm*, or scheme. Here we may behold ourselves as in a glass, soon discover our deviations, blemishes and defects, and know what manner of persons we are: But this, and the examination it subserves, must remain to some farther opportunity. In the mean time, as examination must be esteemed part of *the stated and ordinary* duties of the *Oratory*, I shall not quite pass it over, though I dispatch it in short, and more superficially.

And that I may proceed as distinctly as I can, I shall reduce what I have to say to the following particulars. (1st.) Examination supposes a rule according to which we are to try ourselves, our state, life, and actions. To examine is *ad examen revocare*, to bring to the standard or rule: This is the import of the *English* word; and much the same sense has the *Greek* word, which we translate *examine* in the New Testament, δοκιμάζειν. It notes such a trial of a thing as goldsmiths make of metals by the touchstone: That which can bear the touch is upright, pure, good and approved, δόκιμον; what cannot, as being adulterated, or counterfeit, is reprobate and disapproved, ἀδόκιμον. The examination of ourselves supposes an authentic standard to

which we are to apply, and by which we are to judge of ourselves: *And this is the holy scripture;* which, as it is *given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine*, teaching us what to believe; *for reproof*, pointing out errors, and setting a mark on dangerous principles; for *correction* of manners, of heart, frame, and life; and for *instruction in righteousness*, directing us in all our duties towards God and man: So it is able to make *the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work*, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. It is a complete rule, without any defect, every way sufficient for all the purposes it is designed to serve. It describes the Christian, lays down the essential distinguishing marks, by which he may be known; directs him in all his duties, conducts him in his whole course and walk; *is a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path*, Psal. cxix. 105. This is the rule by which we are to judge of ourselves; he is a Christian that has the heart, temper, frame, and walk here required; he that wants these is ἀδόκιμος, reprobate and disapproved; not that an absolute conformity is expected: The best have something *lacking in* their *faith*, that needs to be perfected, 1 *Thess.* iii. 10. Something lacking in their hope, love, and every grace, many and great defects in their obedience: And our comfort is, that the gospel has its grains of allowance, doth not weigh us rigorously, but accepts of sincerity. True, though imperfect grace; upright, though defective obedience, will pass in the chancery of the gospel, as I may call it: So that though the law of God is our rule, our only rule, to which we must have recourse in our examination, yet we are to consider it in the gospel form, with such abatements and mi-

tigations as are suitable to our state. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* Neither our habits, nor acts of grace and obedience come up to the full demands of the rule; but if we have them in truth and reality, we may stand the test, notwithstanding our deserts, and shall be *accepted in the beloved.*

2dly. There is an examination that refers to our state in general; the great designs of which is the discovery of our spiritual condition, whether we be true and sincere Christians or not. Concerning which let me observe, *that we may know our state. Examine yourselves*, saith the *apostle*, *whether you be in the faith; prove your ownselves; know ye not your ownselves, how that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Every Christian ought to try himself, and may know himself if he be faithful in examining. The frequent exhortations of scripture hereunto imply both these, *viz.* That the knowledge of ourselves is attainable, and that we should endeavour after it. Why should the *apostle* put them upon examining and proving themselves, unless it was possible to know themselves upon such trying and proving? So, 2 Pet. i. 10. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* He cannot refer to an *external* calling, or outward profession of the gospel, that they were sure of already, but must, I presume, refer to an internal call; as if he had said, *Endeavour for a satisfactory evidence of it, that you are Christians, chosen and approved of God.* This they were to make sure, *sure to themselves;* consequently it is what they might do. They might be sure of their calling, and of their good state, or such exhortations as these,

how solemn and serious soever they seem, must be vain, and to no purpose. I add, several have actually attained the knowledge of themselves, and a certainty of their calling. *We know*, saith the *apostle*, *that we have passed from death to life*, 1 John iii. 14. And with how much confidence doth St. *Paul* speak of his own future happiness, 2 *Cor.* v. 1, 2, *&c.* And more directly, 2 *Tim.* iv. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight——. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.* And again, *Phil.* i. 21. 23.

Nor do I apprehend the knowledge of our state (call it assurance if you please), so uncommon and extraordinary a thing as some are apt to imagine; understand, by assurance, a satisfactory evidence of the thing, such as excludes all reasonable doubts, and disquieting fears of the contrary, though, it may be, not all transient suspicions and jealousies. And such an assurance and certainty multitudes have attained, and enjoy the comfort of: And indeed it is of so high importance, that it is a wonder any thoughtful Christian, that believes an eternity, can be easy one week or day without it. And therefore, though this be not the examination I am more immediately concerned with in this discourse, I cannot but earnestly recommend it to the care of the reader. We should examine and try ourselves; do it over and over again; repeat and pursue the inquiry, and not cease till we come to some clearness with reference to our everlasting state; and are able to say upon good grounds, *we know that we are passed from death to life.* If any should ask, how may this be known, I must refer them, for satisfaction, to such as treat professedly of the subject, it being besides my purpose at present;

only let me hint two things, *that we are to take the evidence from the scripture and our own hearts compared together.* The one describes the Christian, the other reports him in this or that particular instance: The former saith what he must be, and is, with respect to his principles, frame, and conduct; the other makes particular application, resumes, and saith, *I am such a one;* or I have reason to hope I am such a one. This may be exemplified by going over any of the great characters of Christians, as given in scripture. *He that believes shall be saved,* saith the scripture; I believe, saith the Christian. *He that loveth God, the same is known, or approved of him,* saith the scripture; I love God, saith the Christian. *If through the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live,* saith the scripture: *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh,* &c. *To them that by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, he will render eternal life;* this I do, saith the Christian; and according to the grounds he has for his assertion, and the evidence of this or that grace and qualification, so is his certainty and assurance. *That he who repenteth shall be pardoned; that the pure in heart shall see God; that he that cometh to Christ he will in no wise cast out;* with the other particulars cited, and many more that might be added, are the express declarations of Scripture; that I am such a one as these texts import and require I should be, is the thing I am concerned to inquire into: If I have reason to think I am, and am not mistaken, the conclusion concerning my present good state and future happiness is undeniable, and is a natural consequence from the premises. *He that believes, repents,* loves God above the world,

that is a new creature, and lives a life of holiness and obedience, *shall be saved;* but this do I, therefore I shall be saved. I cannot be mistaken as to the first proposition, it depending on the authority of God's word; and if I have clearness in the second proposition; if upon comparing myself with the rule, I find an agreement, the conclusion is undeniable: And the evidence of this matter, the knowing ourselves, and discerning our conformity to our rule, is the great business and end of our examination.

Another thing I would hint is, *that the knowledge of our* state, such solid satisfactory evidence, as the Christian may rest in, is the fruit, ordinarily, at least, of much experience; it is not to be attained soon, upon a single inquiry, but is the result of many inquiries: We are to view ourselves *often* in the glass of the world; compare ourselves with it at different times, and in all the varieties of our postures and frames. One while, it may be, we look pretty much like Christians; as when grace is in more lively exercise, corruptions are still, and appear mortified: At another time things look more discouraging, and with a worse face; so that former hopes are dashed, and we begin to call all in question again. Sometimes the grand criterion and mark of a Christian, *the preference of the other world, and the concernments of it, to all the enjoyments of this*, is scarce discernible. At another and better season we are ready to say, with a sort of triumph, *whom have I in heaven but thee?* None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear, so I may finish my course with joy. The things of this world appear so minute, contemptible, and nothing, *mere dross and dung*, compared with the high

important affairs of eternity, that we esteem them scarce worthy of a serious, solicitous thought; and when this becomes our habitual temper, the evidence of our sincerity will be more clear and strong. In short, the Christian will not ordinarily know himself, till he has been a considerable while exercised in his warfare, and has viewed himself from several distances, as I may express it: He must compare himself with his rule, not only once or twice, but often, in all the various shapes in which he appears; and from his proficiency and progress in religion, and growing conformity to his rule, at last form the judgment.

What hand the Spirit of God has in this work, assisting us in the knowledge of ourselves, and in order to an assurance concerning our good state, I am not now to inquire. It is certain, he indited and formed the rule by which we must examine: He is the author of those gracious habits and acts, in which our conformity to the rule consists: He helps us in the exercises of grace: He sometimes, no doubt, shines in upon the mind, enlightens, and, as it were, comments upon his own work, makes it discerned and understood: He may sometimes assist in making the conclusion; embolden the Christian to determine in favour of himself, which his great modesty, humility, and timorousness made him shy of doing. Nor will I deny but he may sometimes, *in an immediate authoritative manner*, interpose and decide the question, that has long been depending in the mind, in favour of the believer. I assert nothing here, neither will I deny this is ever the case. His more ordinary method is to *witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. But

he may possibly, *on special occasions*, that require it, witness *to* them, without much of their concurrence in the work: As when the poor melancholy Christian, that dare scarce entertain a good thought of himself, or any thing he doth, has been long poring upon himself, and is still bewildered, involved in darkness and fears, the divine Spirit may, at such a time, through a special dispensation of grace and favour, come in to his assistance; speak peace, pronounce and make a decision in his favour. But this we are not to promise ourselves nor expect; but wait for evidence in the ordinary way. And I persuade myself, all sensible Christians will take this for a matter of too much moment, not to deserve their serious attention; and though it is not the particular examination I am now chiefly to recommend; it is however supposed to it, and ought to have a place among the duties of the *Oratory*. We should take proper times to settle this great point, and not rest satisfied till it be settled: We should often ask ourselves upon what foundation we stand in religion, and for another world; whether we do not delude ourselves with presumptuous hopes, carry a lie in our right hand; whether we do not build our *house upon the sand*, which will fall at last, *and great*, and dreadful in its consequences, will be *the fall* thereof, *Matt.* vii. 26, 27. O! let us be in good earnest in this matter; search and try ourselves, and beg that God would search us, and help us in searching; *and if there be any wicked way in* us, *lead* us *in the way everlasting*, Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24. That we may not think ourselves *to be something when* we are *nothing*, deceiving ourselves, *Gal.* vi. 3. To prevent which, let every man, as it follows in

the next verse, prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. One caution it may be proper to subjoin, because a mistake here often proves an occasion of discouragement to some, *viz.* That we should not look too high, and because we cannot find ourselves among the best and greatest Christians, therefore conclude we are not Christians. The thing to be inquired into, and that we have to prove, is the truth of grace, and not the degrees of it. The great question, in the examination I am here speaking of, is not whether we have an alloy, a mixture of imperfection, for that we have and shall have whilst in this world, but whether we be standard; whether we be reprobate silver, as is said of them, *Jer.* vi. 30. false counterfeit metal, or whether when tried we come forth as gold, *Job* xxiii. 10. If we be upright before God, have truth in the inward parts, God will accept us notwithstanding infirmities, and therefore we should not reject nor condemn ourselves.

(3.) The Christian having examined and proved himself, so far as to come to some clearness concerning his own good state, it is not necessary (it would indeed be impertinent) to be daily repeating the examination; what need a man inquire after what he knows, or search what he has already found? One cannot imagine that the apostle *Paul*, who had been in the third heaven, and knew there was laid up for him a crown of life, that so earnestly desired *to depart and be with Christ*, had any occasion to examine whether he was a Christian or not. And though it may be allowed he far exceeded common Christians, both for the eminency and evidence of his grace, yet it is certain his privi-

lege was not singular. Others may know themselves, many do know themselves, as has been hinted; and when this is the case of any, it cannot be their duty to be every now and then calling their state in question. Indeed upon any relapse and declining, upon loss of former strength, light, and comfort, it may be proper to revise the account, call things over again; not only do the first works, repent and reform, but also re-examine the state; take occasion to inquire, whether there be no mistake, renew the watch and resolution, beg a fresh unction from heaven, endeavour to get all suspicions removed, and the soul established in the way of truth and peace: Nor will it be improper sometimes to examine, after we have attained a comfortable evidence of our sincerity, in order to confirm the evidence, and improve it into a fuller assurance: The judgment we make of ourselves is not authoritative, much less final; *he that judges us is the Lord*, and we must not think it is so sufficient, that it may not be reversed, much less that it need not to be reviewed: In short, some, I hope many, Christians have solid peace upon solid grounds and clear evidence, and these need not examining, like those that are utterly in the dark, though they may have occasion to look back and revise their work.

(4.) Besides the examination that respects our general state, there is a review of ourselves, and actions, which is our daily constant duty; and this is the *examination* the present discourse is chiefly concerned with, which ought to be made part of the stated work of the closet or *Oratory*. It may be called examination, as it is a comparing ourselves with our rule, bringing

the actions (at night we will suppose, a proper time for this service) of the day to the test, the rule of God's word, inquiring how far they agree hitherto. We are to *commune with our own hearts upon our bed* (or in our chamber, as the word may signify), *Psal.* iv. 4. We are to converse with ourselves, speak to our hearts in our chamber, oratory, or place of retirement; and among other things we should commune with our hearts about, one is, *what has passed in the day*, what has been our conduct and behaviour in it and through it, looking over the occurrences and transactions thereof. A practice that has been recommended by some of the heathen moralists of the greatest name, as *Plutarch*, *Epictetus*, *Marcus Antonius*, and others; particularly by *Pythagoras*, in the verses that go under his name, and are called his golden verses. He advises his scholars every night to recollect the passages of the day, and ask themselves these questions, τί παρέβην, &c. *Wherein have I transgressed? What have I done? What duty have I omitted?* Upon which *Hierocles* thus comments: This course, if duly observed, prefers the divine image in them that use it, leading them to virtue, and all attainable excellency: And it seems some of them practise according to these rules, as *Seneca* tells us. Having suggested that the way to govern the senses and passions, is to call the mind daily to account, he adds, "*Faciebat hoc Sextius*, &c. *Sextius* did "this at the close of the day, addressing himself to his own conscience in the following manner: What evil of thine hast thou healed to-day? What vice hast thou withstood? In what respect art thou better? Anger will cease and become more mild, when it expects

Seneca de Ira. lib. 3. cap. 36.

" daily to be brought before the Judge. No-
" thing more advantageous than this constant
" custom of searching through the day. How
" composedly and freely shall we sleep after
" such a trial (peace being made with God and
" conscience might have been added,) when
" the soul is either admonished or commended,
" and the secret censor has taken cognisance
" of our manners. He goes on, " I daily take
" this course myself, plead my cause, and sit
" in judgment with myself; and at night when
" the light is taken away, and all is hush and
" still, I make a scrutiny into the day, look
" over my words and actions, and hide nothing
" from myself: In such a controversy and de-
" bate thou wast over keen; such a one thou
" admonishedst over freely *(vide ne amplius*
" *istud facias)*: Be upon thy guard for the
" future ——." How noble an example this? How inexcusable shall we Christians be, if we be found less circumspect, critical and exact in our conduct than these Pagans, considering how much stronger motives to religion, and how many greater helps in it, we have?

The advantages of such a course are not a few; particularly, hereby we may attain to, and preserve a distinct clear knowledge of ourselves, of our present state and circumstances; what we are, what we want, what our deserts and infirmities, what the spots of our garments, and blemishes of our minds. He that is daily beholding his face in the glass of God's word, will not easily mistake himself, nor forget what manner of man he is.

Hereby we shall be directed to the proper work and special duty that lies before us; when we know our case, we shall better know what

we have to do, and be upon such endeavours as are most pertinent, and *therefore* most useful. Examination is in order to correction and amendment: We abuse it in ourselves, if we rest in the duty, without looking farther: We are to review our daily walk; that we may reform it, and consequently a daily review will point out to us the subject and matter of our future daily care. This day, saith the Christian (upon his review of things at night) I lost so much time, particularly at ——. I took too great a liberty, particularly in ——. I omitted such an opportunity that might have been improved to better purpose. I mismanaged such a duty ——. I find such a corruption often working; my old infirmity —— still cleaves to me; how easily doth this sin beset me. Oh! may I be more attentive for time to come; more watchful over my heart, take more heed to my ways: May I do so the next day! The knowledge of a distemper is a good step to a cure, at least it directs to proper methods and applications in order to it: Self-acquaintance leads to self-reformation: He that at the close of each day calls over what has passed, inspects himself, his behaviour and manners, will not fall into that security, and those uncensured follies that are so common and so dangerous. This frequent view of himself, unless conscience be stupid and seared (in which case nothing of this nature can be expected), will point out his duty as a penitent and physician, and excite to it.

And then it is evident such a course will enliven, conduct and many ways assist present devotion; will furnish for it and help in the performance, suggest matter for confession, pe-

tition, or thanksgiving, as there is occasion; will make those services more penitent, and in consequence thereof more beneficial. Hereby we shall better understand what especially to insist upon in our addresses to God; what to pray, wait and endeavour for.

It will be an excellent remedy and preservative against sin, and contribute not a little to promote the circumspection and accuracy of life and conversation we should constantly aim at. What a good man saith of prayer, *that praying will make one give over sinning, or sinning make one give over praying*, may be applied here. It is scarce possible to pursue the method I am recommending, and at the same time live loosely and without caution. How shall I answer to myself at night? Such a question will be a check to many follies and indecencies in the day. Conscience will be more tender and watchful, when it knows it must pass through a speedy examination, and be afraid of any liberties, for which it expects immediate censure and reproach. Learn, Christian, this way of communing with thy own heart, of carrying on a judicial process there; set up daily a tribunal in thy heart, and it will have an happy influence upon thy life.

I might enlarge on many more particulars, but shall only add one farther, as a special advantage of such a course, that as it tends to make life more innocent and fruitful, so to make death more safe and comfortable. Did we accustom ourselves to revise matters, and settle accounts every day, we should have less to do at the last; we should have the account, as it were, summed up and stated at the bottom of every page, and consequently shall be less

involved and perplexed, than if we had the whole volume of life then to look over; which indeed would be a vain attempt, unless this frequent posting and adjusting of accounts prepare the matter for a more easy dispatch. But when the Christian has kept his books, the records of conscience, with competent exactness and care; has had frequent reckonings, not only yearly and monthly, but in some measure, *daily:* His business at last will be reduced to a narrow compass, and he will have little to do, but to make a general review, with such recollections and devotions as become a dying saint, compounded of penitential abasements, and rejoicing hopes, dropping his tears over the infirmities he is conscious of, and triumphing in the prospect of his crown, being ready in the mean time to cast it down before the throne, saying, *Lord, thou art worthy.* Blessed state! which the course I am advising to will probably terminate in. Indeed comfort in a dying hour will, I presume, very much depend upon the sensible presence of God then vouchsafed; and who so like to obtain the favour and privilege, as persons engaged in the work I am speaking of? However if they have less comfort, they will have safety; their latter end shall be peace.

Reader, if yet thou knowest nothing of this practice, of the method proposed, neglect it no longer; daily call thyself to the bar of thy own conscience. Object not difficulties; nothing excellent can be attained without some difficulty: A little use will make it familiar and easy, and the pleasure and profit of it will abundantly compensate for all the pains. This is to live for thy soul and eternity; and is no

care, diligence and self-denial due in a matter of such moment? A book of accounts for an ordinary trade, cannot be kept without some attention and application, more than might suffice in the present case; and shall we so readily submit to take pains even to drudgery, for the advantage and accommodation of the body, and reject all suitable endeavours, care and thought for securing our highest and everlasting interest, that of the immortal soul? Oh how shall we upbraid ourselves in hell, I might say be ashamed of ourselves even in heaven, when we reflect upon our negligence and remissness, by which we suffer so great a diminution of our happiness. It will, no question, accent and inflame the torments of the damned, to think a part of the labour and time thrown away in pursuit of the pleasures and profits of the world, might, with the blessing of God, have secured their salvation; and though there will be no room for such reflections in heaven, as would disturb their happiness, yet a reflection on their eager pursuits of vanity and impertinence, and their coolness and indifferency in the most momentous affairs, and what they knew to be such and owned to be such, may be abasing and humbling; hereby their heaven is lessened, and consequently their joy. *Their works follow the blessed that die in the Lord*, Rev. xiv. 13. but where there are no such works, it is certain they cannot follow them. Oh! let us be as wise for our souls, as others are for their bodies; be as diligent for another world and for eternity, as others are for this world, and we shall not neglect a course so well calculated to promote our best interest and happiness.

Some directions I shall subjoin for the use of those that are disposed to the duty prescribed, this method of daily examination. (1.) Acquaint yourselves well with your rule, by which you are to examine; and the more distinct and exact your knowledge is in this matter, the better you are prepared for the duty before us. I need not repeat, that the word of God is our rule; with this we should endeavour to acquaint ourselves. But as it cannot be expected every Christian should have all the particulars of it, that refer to this matter, in his mind and in readiness, as often as he has occasion to compare himself therewith, it would be well to be supplied with an abstract, a scheme of sacred rules relating to every part of our duty. The Jews reduced their law to six hundred and thirteen precepts; I do not doubt but there is a spice of their usual superstition in this division: It is however unquestionable, that the entire Bible will afford us less help in our examination, than when it is divided in the manner proposed; we need not be solicitous about the number of its precepts, but should be careful to bring them under proper heads: These should be treasured up in the mind (it may not be amiss to write them down in order thereto) and well digested, as so many principles by which we are to govern and examine ourselves. They make what is called the *synterisis*, the rule of conscience, by which it directs our actions, and judges thereof.

(2.) Be as particular and full in the examination as you can; try yourselves on every head of religion, and rule of sacred practice. The method of doing this may be according to your scheme or draught, if you have one; or

according to the order of time in the process of the day; as thus, what was my care in the morning? Did I observe rule then, endeavouring when I awaked to be still with GOD? Did I consecrate my first thoughts to him? How was the rest of the day employed? I would look over the several hours of it. —— Or you may proceed according to the business of the day; religious business; as thus, did I not neglect the duties of the closet? How have I performed them? Where you will find room for several inquiries. How did I discharge the duties of family religion? And so with reference to common business. The management of your particular callings, your converse, diversion, *&c.* The affairs and occurrences of the day may be brought under these heads, and an examination pertinently carried on upon them: Or we may examine by our several faculties and powers; as our thoughts, desires, affections, passions, tongue, appetite and senses, asking ourselves how all these have been employed and governed; what have been the sins of them. Or lastly, the same design will be answered if we proceed in the examination upon the three great branches of our duty, towards God, our neighbour and ourselves. It is good to observe some method both to prevent rambling and impertinence, and that nothing material may be overlooked, though no one particular method is necessary. Let every one take his choice here, only see that the work be thoroughly done, and the enquiry extended through all our duties and obligations.

(3.) Do not neglect a *transient review* when you can do no more; even what I intend by the former, may be dispatched in a little time,

in half a quarter of an hour, and sometimes less (though often we may allow more to it); and when the Christian is straitened with respect to time, or any way rendered less capable of such work, a *transient review* of the day may be all he can pretend to, and it may be sufficient.

(4.) Do not examine merely to censure, but to approve as there is occasion. Take notice of what is good as well as what is amiss, that you may praise, though not so much yourselves, as the grace of God *that is with you*. We should not place religion in complaining, nor delight too much in that strain: We ought to be thankful for the good we do, or get any day: No question we may take the comfort of our own good designs, endeavours, works, success, &c. and should do so when there is reason for it, provided we acknowledge with suitable gratitude the hand that has supplied and assisted us. It is not any part of humility to overlook the grace of God, or reject the comfort that belongs to us. We should examine not only to discover what is wrong, but what is right, that we may bewail the one, and rejoice in the other.

(5.) It may be sometimes proper to take down in writing any of the more remarkable occurrences of the day: If you have received any special mercy; had special help in any duty and work you were concerned in, or been guilty of any great omission, failing, &c. note it down in your paper, as thus: This morning when I awaked, instead of fixing my thoughts on God and divine subjects, I suffered them to ramble, and to wander from one impertinence to another, by which means I became wofully in-

disposed for the duties before me, for my usual devotion. Indeed I prayed, but it was in a poor broken heartless manner. ——— This morning when I arose, instead of applying myself to God in prayer, which I generally find best to do immediately, (after a few serious reflections) I gave way to idle musing, to the great disorder of my heart and frame. How often have I suffered for want of more watchfulness on this occasion? When shall I be wise! — I have this day shamefully trifled, almost through the whole of it: Was in my bed when I should have been on my knees; prayed but cooly in the morning; was strangely off my guard in the business and conversation I was concerned with in the day, particularly at ———. I indulged to very foolish sinful vile thoughts, *&c.* I fell in with a strain of conversation too common among all sorts, *speaking evil of others;* taking up a reproach against my neighbour. I have often resolved against this sin, and yet run into it again. How treacherous this wicked heart of mine! I have lost several hours this day in mere sauntering and idleness ——. This day I had an instance of my own infirmity, that I was a little surprised at, and I am sure I ought to be humbled for. The behaviour of ——, from whom I can expect nothing but humour, indiscretion and folly, strangely ruffled me, and that after I had warning over and over again. What a poor impotent and contemptible creature am I! This day I have been kept, in a great measure, from my too frequent failings ——. I had this day very comfortable assistance from God, upon an occasion not a little trying ——. What shall I render? And in this manner the Christian may proceed, upon the

review he makes of himself in his Oratory, varying his censures as occasion requires, and suiting them to his different circumstances: And it may be, you will find it worth while to transfer some minutes or hints of this kind into your diary; I mean when any thing has offered in the day that calls for more than ordinary notice.

6thly. Besides stated examination and reviews of our case at the close of each day, there are times that call for more special examination; as *new-year's* day; every Lord's day; a sacrament day, and a fast day. On these occasions the Christian is to make more diligent search, and take a greater compass in his examination; revise former less accounts, compare his state at different stages and periods, that he may the better judge of himself, and apply to such work as the present condition of his affairs require. Such specimens have been offered already under the head of examination, as are suitable to most of these occasions, and the Christian that is disposed to the work will easily supply the rest; and therefore I shall forbear exemplifying what I have recommended.

7thly. Endeavour to get and keep conscience in such a plight, as that it may not fail nor deceive you in the discharge of this duty. A faithful, tender conscience is one of the greatest blessings in the world; it will make life more regular, and the review of it more easy. *David's heart smote him*, when *he cut off Saul's skirt*, 1 Sam. xxiv. 5. He was got upon a precipice; approached too near a forbidden life, and was running into temptation: And for this his heart smote him; it would not suffer him to proceed farther, nor doth it pass what was done

without a rebuke. And this is the property and great happiness of a faithful conscience; it is a bosom preacher, stands centinel in the soul, gives warning of approaching danger, checks us when we come near it, admonishes upon the commission of sin, and is at once the guard and censor of life. Study and pray for an upright faithful conscience, and labour to preserve it in a due state, that it may be fit for its office: to which purpose it is not only necessary that it be awakened, sanctified, furnished with light from above; a competent knowledge of duty in all the particulars thereof; but it must be kept awake and attentive. And when this is the case, conscience will be ready upon call, ready to produce its records, and to confirm with its suffrage and voice every just censure we pass in the examination of ourselves. Whereas if conscience be neglected, corrupted in its principles, or lulled asleep, we shall make nothing of such work, shall neither have inclination to it, nor success in it.

8thly. Endeavour so to manage this work, the daily review of yourselves, your life and actions, that you may be encouraged to it, and to persist in it by the advantage and comfort of it: A loose, unguarded life is but seldom reviewed; and if, upon the review of it, we do not correct it, we shall soon grow weary of reviewing. In short, we should live so that we may review our course with pleasure; and so improve the daily censure we have occasion to pass, that we may still find more and more pleasure in it. This will make self-examination delightful, and consequently invite to it, will gradually refine the heart and frame, and carry us on towards perfection.

9thly. Apply yourselves to God suitably to the state of things with you. Our first and immediate work after examination is with God, confessing what has been amiss, acknowledging his grace and help in what has been well; begging forgiveness, farther conduct, assistance, and the like. Nor is it the least of the advantages that will attend the conscientious discharge of this duty; that it will indite our prayers, and influence our devotion. When we have searched ourselves we should apply to heaven in a manner becoming our case.

10thly. Upon every review and censure of yourselves, look up to the great Peace-maker the Lord Jesus; *remember if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father*, 1 John ii. 1. Plead the blood of atonement, and lay your hand upon the head of this great victim: The grace, favour, and help you have received must be placed to his account; and it is through him only that your humiliation and repentance can be accepted. Whatever therefore you do, and that you find seasonable and necessary to do, upon your examination, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks*, (and confessing) *unto God and the Father by him*, Col. iii. 17.

And having mentioned these few particulars by way of direction, which might have been much more enlarged upon, I leave them with the reader. As for such as may object against this method, as savouring of legalism, and being more ado than needs, pretending we are to believe, and not work, in order to salvation, I have nothing to say to them in this discourse, which is calculated for persons of another stamp. The more common objections, I reckon, will be taken from the difficulty of the work, and are

the language of sloth and carnal security; but I have not room to plead with such at present from the importance and necessity of the thing; the pains they cheerfully submit to in affairs of infinitely less consequence, &c. I would only desire them to ask themselves, whether their own reason and conscience do not approve the method prescribed, as just, good, and profitable; whether they do not spend more time to less purpose every day, than might be sufficient for this exercise; whether this course of religion (conversing with God and themselves in the way recommended) would not yield more comfort in a dying hour, than the method of life they are in, employing their time in excessive, unnecessary care and labour about the world, or passing their evenings in clubs, at taverns, or alehouses, in company, diversions, &c. Reader, lay these questions before thy own conscience, and all I request is, that thou wilt answer them in the fear of God, and act according to the conviction of thy own mind.

SECT. XII.

Of secret Prayer. Some particulars explaining the Duty, and directing as to the management of it. A specimen of Prayer, representing the Order of it.

4thly. Prayer is a branch of the duty and devotion of the closet, that every one will expect should be considered in a discourse of closet

religion, and some may think should have been more considered than here they will find it. Indeed all serious persons make a great account of prayer; they are so far from leaving it out of the closet, that they are apt to run into the other extreme, and make it the only devotion there. Closet religion, with them signifieth nothing but closet prayer; they extend it to no farther, and aim at nothing more. This is the case of many, I am afraid. How much they are mistaken in their apprehensions, and how defective in their practice, the former discourses will shew. But though it be *only a part*, it must be granted, it is a most necessary and important part of the duty of the Oratory, and therefore demands a place in this work.

As to the manner, properties and several qualifications of prayer, it is besides my present purpose to enlarge upon them: Most books of devotion insist on these things. And I shall rather refer the reader to them, than undertake to do over again what has been so often done, and well done already; especially as I have left myself little room for any thing farther. I must not, however, wholly pass over so necessary a branch of secret devotion, and leave it untouched; though I shall consider it only in a general and superficial way; offering a few remarks, which may be of use for the better understanding the duty, and assist in the performance of it.

1st. There are certain great and essential requisites and qualifications of prayer, which are always the same, and always necessary; necessary to all persons and in every kind of prayer, and consequently must be found in that of the closet, as well as others; particularly it

must proceed from an inward divine principle. It is *the prayer of the righteous that availeth*, James v. 16. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight*, Prov. xv. 8. I do not say it is not the duty of unsanctified and wicked men to pray. *Simon Magus*, when in the gall of bitterness, &c. was bid to pray, *Acts* viii. 21, 22. The prayer of such, when it flows from a conviction of their guilt, danger, misery, a sense of their spiritual wants, and is accompanied with desires of grace, may be a means of obtaining grace, and indeed is appointed for that purpose: But where the heart is destitute of grace, and of desires after it, prayer must be of little value and efficacy. Wicked men are to pray that they may reform, and reform that they may pray with acceptance. *God heareth not sinners*, John ix. 31. none that *regard iniquity in their hearts*, Psal. lxvi. 18. Indeed the prayer of such persons is full of inconsistency and lies, and carries in it a direct contradiction to the inward sentiments, heart and frame: And what excellency can there be in such forms of hypocrisy and flattery?

Farther, Prayer must be *in faith*, James i. 6, 7. accompanied with a firm persuasion of the being and perfections of God, of his providence and government; of his power, wisdom, goodness and truth; with resignation to him, and dependence upon him. It must be with fervour and importunity, *Matt.* viii. 7, 8. &c. *James* v. 16. It must be in charity and attended with a peaceable, forgiving temper, *Matt.* vi. 12. 14. *Matt.* v. 23, 24. 1 *Tim.* ii. 8. It must be in the name of Christ, *John* xvi. 23. *Col.* iii. 17. and in the Spirit, *Eph.* vi. 18. *Jude* 20. per-

formed by his assistance, and under his conduct and influence. These are essential qualifications, requisite in every prayer, which God will accept, and from which we can expect profit and comfort: The distinct explication of each would take up more room than I can allow. The reader will answer my intention in mentioning them, if he be solicitous to find these qualifications in himself, and discover them in all his addresses to God.

2dly. Though the essential properties and principles of prayer, as I may call them, are unchangeable, and the same in secret as in any other sort of prayer, yet the matter of secret prayer is various and different. The scripture we have read, the meditation we have been engaged in; the examination and review of ourselves (all which, according to the method proposed, may fitly precede) will direct our petitions, supply our confessions, thanksgivings, &c. Often the occurrences of the day will furnish matter for prayer, and influence our devotion: As the mercies, deliverances, trials, temptations, and miscarriages of it. At night our prayer should be very much formed with a reference to these things, and will most naturally and pertinently proceed upon these heads: And in the morning, the view and prospect of what is before us will conduct us in our applications to God. We are to consider our stated, known duties, dangers, and difficulties; and if there be any thing extraordinary expected in the service of the day, order our prayers accordingly, have a special regard to both cases in our addresses. In short, the providences and events of each day, the affairs and circumstances of the Christian are so variable, that his prayer cannot

be always the same without being (to say no worse) less pertinent.

3dly. In secret prayer, we should have a special respect to our *present case*; not to this *only*, but to this *especially*, so as to assist more particularly and copiously upon it: As the supply of a present necessity, pardon of a late transgression, direction in an affair of importance depending, deliverance from an imminent danger, or threatening temptation, *&c.* Thus when the *apostle* had the thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him; he *besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from* him, 2 *Cor.* xii. 8. (*i. e.*) He continued and repeated his petitions, insisting with great earnestness (in his secret addresses, no doubt) upon that particular thing. We are encouraged to come boldly to the Throne of Grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help *in time of need;* seasonable, opportune grace, as the word signifies; grace answerable to all our present exigency and want. We should study ourselves, be fully apprized of our case, live acquainted with our own hearts, and have as perfect a comprehension, as we can, of our circumstances, weaknesses and wants; and from thence indite our prayers. As for instance, if we find any corruption more than ordinarily prevalent; any particular sin easily besetting us; we should, in our supplications, more especially, level against, and beg deliverance from it, and victory over it. If in the day we have fallen into this or that iniquity which we have often confessed, we should in our retirement at night, single that out for special resentment, bewailing the folly, begging help, and renewing resolutions against it. If we have received signal

favours and mercies in the day, our devotion at night should savour of them, and express the sense we have of them. If we have any duty before us in the day of importance and difficulty, in which we have often miscarried, we should not overlook this in our morning devotion, but lay the matter before God, and be importunate for his presence, conduct and blessing. "Lord, supply and furnish me for "such a service and work, that by thy providence I may be called to; preserve me from "the weakness and infirmity I so often suffer-"by; grant me a composure and presence of "mind suitable to my occasions; may I have "more firmness of mind, meekness, humility, "&c. Oh! may thy grace be sufficient for "me." There may be many such strokes and sallies as these in our secret devotion, and often should be. In short, our prayers should be formed according to our hearts, as our hearts are formed according to our occasions and circumstances. When it is thus they are most pertinent, and are like to be most successful.

4thly. It is evident, from what has been said, and may be inferred from the nature of the duty itself, that a greater liberty may be taken in closet prayer with respect to the matter, method, expression, &c. than is allowable in public. We may insist more copiously on some particulars, and even on a single head, than would be proper in public; begging a special manner, confessing a particular sin, deprecating an evil we feel or fear: We may, in private, enlarge upon any of these things, and confine our prayer to them, more than would be convenient in public. The *apostle* besought the Lord *thrice* for the same thing, 2 *Cor.* xii. 8. He often

returned to the subject, and very pathetically and largely, no doubt, insisted upon it. *Christ* prayed the third time, saying the same words, *Matt.* xxvi. 44. I do not suppose he said only those words; but being under a particular pressure, and his mind being filled with it, he dwelt upon the subject; his devotion run upon it at that time. A greater liberty may also be used here (in secret prayer) *as to method and expression. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine*, saith the spouse, *Cant.* i. 1. *Draw me, we will run after thee*, ver. 3. How abrupt the beginning, and incorrect the style, would the critic say! The divine passion, that sometimes fills the heart of the devout, will not be confined by the rules of grammar and oratory. Indeed, sighs, groans, and tears are the best oratory in secret prayer: Nor do the little pauses, frequent excursions, and parentheses, which an holy *pathos* may occasion, mar the connection and oratory, but rather improve it. I might add, a greater liberty may be allowed *with respect to gesture and the expression of affections.* Christ *fell on the ground and prayed*, Mark xiv. 35. And we read, that *in the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. Devout persons know something of this; they are often prostrate before God, pouring out their tears and their souls, with an overflowing and indulgence of affections, that in public would be indecent, but here have an ornament and excellency in them. On these accounts, as well as others, I cannot but think that,

5thly. What is called extemporary prayer is most agreeable to the closet; it gives more scope for enlargement on occasional subjects, is

more suitable to the liberty, which is not only allowable, but expedient in secret; admits of greater variety than forms, and may be better accommodated to every case the Christian may have before him. Not that I think praying *extempore*, or without a pre-composed set form of words, absolutely necessary to the acceptable performance of secret prayer. I doubt not but serious persons, who have long accustomed themselves to forms, may exercise great devotion, and find much comfort in the use of them. Indeed the manner of prayer (with, or without a form) I reckon to be so far indifferent, that neither the one nor the other is necessary; so necessary, as that the different mode cannot be acceptable. Nor should we allow ourselves the liberty that is too commonly taken, to censure those that differ from us in this matter; as if, because they do not pray in our mode, there could be no devotion in their prayer. I do not question but one reason of these mutual censures, is want of experiencing the way this or that side condemns. Thus some condemn extemporary, or free prayer, because they have never tried it; and having, through disuse, brought themselves under an inability for it, they are ready to think the case is the same with all others, as with them: And for the same reason others are apt to censure the use of forms; because they have never been accustomed to them. They cannot tell how to pray with any seriousness by a form, and so hastily conclude nobody else can: Whereas, had the pious and good in either way (supposing the same divine principles, graces, and affections they now have) been accustomed to the contrary way, they might have found much the same devotion in it;

it is like would have shewn the same zeal for it. The graces of prayer, faith, love, humility, contrition, resignation and holy desires, devout affections, are the life and soul of prayer, and much more to be regarded than this or that mode of outward performance. As for the class of *ranters*, that open their mouth wide, and pour out their reproaches upon *extempore* prayer, calling it cant, jargon, blasphemous effusions, and the like, I do not think their rudeness worth regarding; I pity their rashness, and despise their insults.

Nor am I only willing to allow the lawfulness of forms, but in some cases to give them the preference; Bishop *Wilkins* calls them *crutches*, and no doubt there are lame Christians that cannot go without them (to say nothing of the inability contracted by disuse). Some are so mean in these faculties, have their minds so little opened, have so small a stock of ideas, and these so confused; in short, their experience and sense of spiritual things is so little, and they move in so low a sphere in religion, that I do not question but a well composed form may be helpful to them *for a time;* especially if got off book, with a liberty to vary it, and add to it as they can, and find occasion. Not but even these persons, many of them at least, if they endeavoured it, might, I suppose, surmount the necessity, and outgrow the usefulness of a form. Farther progress in religion, and acquaintance with God and their own hearts, would give them enlargement; *the Spirit of God, sent forth into their hearts*, would help their infirmities, and enable them to cry, *Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6. Not that the Spirit will teach them grammar, rhetoric, propriety, and elegance of expression;

but these are too mean to have any stress laid upon them in a matter of this nature, even by wise men, much less by God. We *that are evil* will not reject the just and dutiful requests of our children, though they utter them lisping, and in broken language; much less will our heavenly Father do it. *I is* (ego est) *a poor vile sinner*, &c. may have more oratory in it, before the throne of grace, when it proceeds from a sensible broken heart, than the most accurate and smoothest harangue tainted with pride and *pharisaism*. Excuse this digression. What I am saying is, that forms may to some Christians be expedient and useful; an help to their weakness, furnishing them with matter and words, guiding them as to method and expression, *&c.*

Notwithstanding these concessions, I apprehend *extempore* prayer best suited to the closet; and that stated forms are ordinarily an hindrance to devotion, and attended with several inconveniencies. They exclude such particular cases as providence lays before us, and invites us to consider, and which should often, at least, be largely insisted upon in secret prayer. They tend to narrow the faculties, and clog the devotion of a well prepared mind. Let us suppose a person of good proficiency in religion, well acquainted with the scripture and divine subjects, and with his own heart in all the varieties of the Christian frame; that has been long exercised in the several parts of his warfare; has been frequent and fervent in prayer, in which he has spent many hours and days with much enlargement and success. Let us also suppose him employed in such exercises as I have been exhorting to; reading the scripture, expound-

ing and preaching it to himself; meditating on some divine subject, reviewing the actions of the day; and now full of his own particular case, and of those divine things he has been conversant with; must such a person, think we, stand still, and pluck his book out of his pocket, before he can open his mouth to God? or would not the book and form direct him from the work he would find lying directly before him, and which his present circumstances, heart, and frame lead to? Would he need it? Could he use it without being fettered and encumbered? Surely, a form in this case would be like leaving the chariot of *Aminadab* to ride in———. If it be said, I put the case too strong, and suppose attainments not common—I answer, the argument will hold in such cases at least, and it will hold proportionably in instances of a lower nature. If the best Christians suffer by forms, others do so in the degree wherein they are above them, and need them not; nor will they (practice supposed, and prejudice laid aside) be useful to any but Christians of the lowest classes.

I may reckon it among the disadvantages of a form, and as another instance thereof, that it inverts the natural order of things, and occasions an indecent ὑστερον πρωτερον in devotion: Prayer should take rise from the heart: All divine, acceptable prayer doth so, receiving its formation there. It is properly the presenting the desires to God; consequently words are to follow the affections, not lead them, and be commanded and directed by the desires, the inward sentiments and frame; whereas in a stated form, the inward affections are prescribed to, and, as I may say, anticipated: The heart is rather brought to the words, than the words to the

heart; by which means the proper source of prayer is shut up, and another opened. I might add to the same purpose, that forms often hinder persons from saying what they should, as well as make them say what they should not. It is impossible that any form should answer every emergency and occasion, and take in all the variety of the Christian's case. My circumstances to-day may require that my prayer should be very different from what it was yesterday, if it be pertinent, and such as my book will by no means suit; so that being confined to it, I am carried off my point, and hindered from pursuing the present subject, that by providence of God, and the state of my affairs, I am most immediately concerned with. Were all the subjects of a kingdom to address their sovereign in all their wants, it would scarce be thought pertinent to provide a *common form* for them, when their cases are almost as many, and as various as their persons. And then as forms prevent what should be said, so they frequently lead to what should not, and cannot truly be said; putting words into the mouth, to which the present state and frame of the heart doth not answer. But it is not my business here to manage a dispute; nor is it my design, in what I have said, to censure the devotion of those that are otherwise minded. I cannot question but many pray to very good purpose by a form; but I beg leave to say it appears to me they unnecessarily hamper themselves, and that in most cases, the other method of free, *extempore* prayer, especially in secret, is very much preferable, and I have given my reasons why I think it so, and refer them to the reader's judgment.

6thly. Notwithstanding the greater liberty allowable in secret prayer, and the regard that ought to be had therein to our present case and circumstances; and that consequently the Christian should not confine himself to any one uniform method; yet I reckon it of some use to understand the proper order and method of prayer; and to be well acquainted with the several parts of it. Christians have their *common*, as well as special cases; have desires, graces, mercies, enjoyments, infirmities, and wants in *common*, and which are very much the same; the same in one as in another, and the same with particular persons at all times: And no doubt regard ought to be had to these, in the usual course of our devotions. Indeed, special cases ought not to be overlooked; but should, as I have hinted, often direct and form our prayers: But still we are to attend to the great and stated occasions of devotion, and business of prayer; confessing the common sins of our nature and practice; blessing God for the common mercies of his providence and grace; petitioning for such good things as we and all stand in need of, and that always. The general and common concernments of religion, common I mean to the *fideles*, all the faithful, are of greatest necessity and importance, and therefore should have proper room in our stated devotions. In order to which we should, as I said, endeavour to understand the method and matter of prayer in the whole compass of it: Hereby we shall be furnished for the duty at all times (yet internal qualifications supposed;) be kept from rambling, and be the more regular in our addresses.

That I may more fully explain myself here, I shall, for the assistance of such as need it, represent what I take to be, if not the best, yet a proper method of prayer, comprehending all the parts of it: A regular prayer, I reckon, should consist of these particulars; and being disposed in the order following, they shew the *method* of prayer, *viz.* invocation, thanksgiving, confession, petition, intercession, self-dedication, and a conclusion.

1st. *Invocation.* This we should begin with, which includes the mention of God's names, attributes, and perfections, with an address to him for audience and acceptance. We should first enlarge upon some of the divine perfections, whereby the mind may be awed, the affections raised, and a foundation laid for the exercise of such graces as make up the devotion of prayer; as fear, reverence, love, trust, &c. And then having viewed and contemplated the glorious Object of prayer, we should bespeak his presence with us, and acceptance of us.

2dly. We may next proceed to thanksgiving; in which, ordinarily, we should be not only distinct and particular, but copious; blessing and adoring God as the creator, preserver, governor, and benefactor of the world; for common providence; for special instances of providence and grace; all which may be enumerated, and should be enlarged upon. I forbear instances under this and the other heads, designing to exemplify the whole in a specimen of prayer. Let me only add, that we should dispatch at once what concerns one part and branch of prayer, before we proceed to another. As when we are upon the head of thanksgiving, we should go

through it, before we pass to another subject: The not attending to this is one main occasion of the confusion and disorder some persons fall into in their prayers.

3dly. Confession may fitly succeed thanksgiving; which we may pass to in some such manner as this. "But, O my God! how have I re- "quited thee evil for good! What unsuitable "returns have I made for that goodness and "mercy of thine that has followed me all "my days, &c." And indeed the consideration of the many favours we have been acknowledging will tend to affect the heart, and bring it into a penitential frame, and so fit it for the work it is now to engage in. In our confession we should endeavour to be as particular and full as we can, laying open the evils of heart and life, with all their aggravations.

4thly. Petition may be next subjoined, or supplications for the blessings we want. We may connect it with the former head thus, "And as "my sins are many, so are my necessities many "and great. Lord, I come to thee for a sup- "ply; bless me, O my God! with all spiritual "blessings in Christ Jesus." I mention the connexion, because there is really a beauty and advantage in fit transitions, though chiefly in public prayer, where more regard is to be had to them.

5thly. To petition may be joined intercession: The former respects ourselves, this others. And here we are to give our charity full scope, and take in all proper cases; praying for mankind in general; for the church of Christ; for the community to which we belong; for magistrates, ministers; for our families and relations; for

the afflicted, tempted; for persecutors and enemies.

6thly. Self-dedication will properly enough follow; in which we devote ourselves to the service of God, and commit ourselves to his future conduct and protection; begging he would take a fuller possession of our hearts, *&c.*

7thly. All is to be included with a sort of a review of the work; begging forgiveness of what has been amiss; and for that purpose pleading the name and intercession of the Lord Jesus, and confirming the whole with an affectionate *Amen.*

These are the several parts of prayer; and this I reckon a very proper method of it. I know this order is different from what some prescribe; but as the thing itself is very much indifferent, it is not worth while to contend about it, much less would I insist upon it as necessary. It will, perhaps, be thought confession should precede thanksgiving; that having, by the exercise of repentance and faith, in the mediation of Christ, made peace with God, we may, with more assurance and holy confidence, address ourselves to him in the remaining service: And I should so far have complied with the objection, as to have given a specimen or two according to that, and some other variations (though I prefer the method I have chose), but that I am obliged to study brevity.

Let me add, it is not necessary to go through all these heads of prayer at all times, no, not in public prayer, much less in secret. It is not necessary to tie ourselves up to this order, especially in our secret addresses: We may insist sometimes on one, or few particulars more largely, but transiently touching the other, and

should ever be ready to attend the call of providence, and make room for special, occasional subjects. In short, all I design hereby is to represent the order of prayer, and draw a sort of a plan of it, for the assistance of younger persons chiefly, though some others might probably receive advantage by it. To render my design more effectual, I shall exemplify the rules mentioned, in a *specimen* of prayer, which I here subjoin.

A Specimen of Prayer; *exhibiting all the Parts of a complete Prayer in their proper Order; designed chiefly for the Assistance of younger Persons, and for their Direction in the Method of Prayer.*

* Blessed and glorious God; thou art the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things, the Father of mercies, and God of all grace: I believe that thou art, and art a rewarder of all those that diligently seek thee. Thou, whose name alone is *Jehovah*, art the most high over all the earth; thy greatness is unsearchable, thy understanding is infinite, thy tender mercies are over all thy other works: From everlasting to everlasting thou art God; always the same, *with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning:* Thou fillest, O Lord, heaven and earth with thy presence; thou searchest the heart, and triest the reins;

* The invocation; being an acknowledgment of God's name, his attributes, and perfections, and an address for audience and acceptance.

thou knowest my down-sitting and up-rising; thou compasseth my path, and art acquainted with all my ways; yea, all things are naked and open to the eyes of that God, with whom I have to do. Lord, help me to consider this, to represent thee to myself, when I approach thee, in all thy glories and excellencies: And do thou suitably impress my mind therewith; fill my soul with an awe and reverence of thy majesty, with trust and confidence in thee, and all devout affections: Thou art a spirit; help me at all times to worship thee in spirit and in truth.

And as I am now come to seek thy grace, and beg thy presence, acceptance and blessing; look down upon me in mercy; O let thy Spirit help my infirmities, and teach me what to pray for, and as I ought: Give ear unto my voice, consider my meditation; hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for unto thee will I pray: My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, in the morning (and evening) will I direct my prayer unto thee and look up: Hast thou not said, ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: Make good thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope; and let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Thanksgiving. I am not worthy, O Lord, of the least of all thy mercies: and yet how large a share have I had of them? Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. I own and adore thee as the great Creator of all things; for by the word of the Lord were the heavens

made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth: He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. I am thy creature, O Lord, thy hands have made and fashioned me; thou art the God of the spirits of all flesh; the father of my spirit, and my body is thy workmanship: Thine eye did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them: Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, hast fenced me with bones and sinews; thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation preserveth my spirit: In thee I live and move, and have my being. Thou hast made me after thy own likeness, but a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned me with glory and honour; hast taught me more than the beasts of the earth, and made me wiser than the fowls of heaven. Oh! how much am I indebted to thy bounty and goodness herein? Help me to worship and bow down, to kneel before the Lord my Maker: May those powers, those faculties and capacities, by which thou hast distinguished me from the rest of thy creatures, and advanced me above them, be devoted to thy service, and employed in thy praise.

I bless thee for thy tender care of me in my infancy, in that weak and helpless state: Thou tookest me out of the womb, and madest me to hope when I hung on the breast; I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's bowels; it is owing to thy providence that I died not from the womb, that I *then* gave not up the ghost; that the knees prevented me and the breasts that I should

suck: This I would acknowledge with a thankful heart. Accept, O Lord, my desire to praise thee! I bless thee for the constant attendance of the same providence ever since; and for all the instances of thy goodness towards me; that thou hast fed me all my life, and redeemed me from all evil. I bless thee for deliverance from sickness and distempers, and from the many dangers I have been exposed to: That I was not cut off with pining sickness, or with a sudden stroke, [particularly by *, &c.] That I was not deprived of the residue of my years, but that thou hast in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption. Lord, thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. Oh! may thy goodness lead to repentance; may I walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I bless thee that I have been brought forth in a land enjoying the gospel, and not in the region and shadow of death; that I was not born among *Pagans*, who have not a Bible to use, or *Papists*, who will not allow the use of it: Thou hast shewed thy word unto *Jacob*, thy statutes and judgments unto *Israel;* thou hast not dealt so with many other nations; and as for thy judgments, they have not known them. O my soul! praise thou the Lord. I bless thee for thy gospel: for thy Son, the redeemer of lost sinners. May his name be (to me) as ointment poured forth. O blessed be God, thou hast so loved the world, as to give thy only begotten Son: *That in the fulness of time thou*

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* Here mention such special deliverances as you have had, a catalogue of which it is good to preserve.

didst send forth thy Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. I bless thee for his holy life, his meritorious death, triumphant resurrection and ascension; for his sitting at thy right hand, where he ever lives to make intercession for us. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (may I not add, of whom I am chief!) Lord, grant me an interest in this great salvation! I bless thee for thy Spirit, whom thou hast sent to abide with the church for ever; to convince of sin, sanctify and renew the heart, and dwell in the souls of believers. Oh! may he take up his abode in my soul, quickening, guiding, sealing, and comforting me. I bless thee for the appointment of a gospel-ministry; that thou hast given pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. I bless thee for all the ordinances of the gospel, and for the constant benefit and advantages I have enjoyed of public instruction: Oh! may I be *a doer of the word, and not an hearer only, deceiving my own soul:* Lord, teach me to profit; make thy word the saviour of life unto life to my soul.

I am thankful, O Lord, I was born of parents who profess the gospel, and who have been solicitous, and concerned to bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. I bless thee I was born in thy family, in thy church, within thy covenant; that I was in infancy solemnly devoted to thee, entered among thy disciples and servants. I bless thee for the early care of my parents towards me, towards

my body, especially for their care of my immortal soul; for their repeated instructions, faithful admonitions and reproofs, for their seasonable corrections, good example, and affectionate prayers. Oh! may I never be unthankful to thee the author, nor to them the instruments of so much good. I bless thee for all the helps I have had for my improvement in useful knowledge, especially in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal, that I can read thy word; have been instructed in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and that I have still line upon line, and precept upon precept; still enjoy the public teaching of thy ministers. O my God, grant all may not be in vain; how much shall I have to answer for, if, after all, I be found unholy, unsanctified, unfruitful, a cumberer of the ground! Oh! Water all from above; write thy law in my heart, help me that I may incline mine ear unto wisdom, and apply my heart to understanding. I bless thee for the restraints of thy grace and providence, that I am not as vile and profane as many others of my acquaintance. I bless thee that thou hast, as I would humbly hope, made some good impressions on my soul, hast * begun a good work there; hast called me by thy grace, and revealed thy son in me. Lord, strengthen what thou hast wrought, and grant me more evidence of that great and good work! perform it to the day of Christ Jesus. I bless thee for the supplies of thy providence, for bread

* This must be left out, or varied, as the case of persons may by them be apprehended to require.

to eat, and raiment to put on; for continued life and health, for the direction and conduct of thy grace, and spirit, in any particulars; for the affection and kindness of my parents and relations, and countenance of other friends; for the safety of every night, and comfort of every morning; and above all, for the hope and prospect of a glorious immortality. O my soul! bless the Lord, and all that is within me bless his holy name; bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all, or any of his benefits: Lord, may I not only speak, but live thy praise.

* But, O my God! how have I requited thee evil for good? what unsuitable returns have I made for that goodness and mercy of thine, that has followed me all my days? I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face before thee, O God; for mine iniquities are increased over mine head, and my trespass is grown up to the heavens: Lord, I would lie in the dust, smite on the breast, and cry unclean, unclean. I own, O Lord, I am the seed of evil doers; I have a sinful, sinning nature, and my life hitherto has been stained with many actual transgressions: *By one man's disobedience* many, *all were made sinners;* and I among the rest: *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* And how soon did this fountain of heart-corruption issue forth, and shew itself in suitable streams; my first grapes were wild grapes: How much of that folly have I experienced, that is bound up in the heart of a child? The imagination of my heart has been evil from my youth; I have been a transgressor even from the womb, going astray as soon as born: How early did pride, anger, envy, revenge, unruly appetite, self-will, and other head-strong corruptions break forth,

* Confession of sin.

and appear in my life? I was soon, too soon, wise to do evil, but alas to do good I had no knowledge! Oh! remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; but according to thy mercy remember me for thy goodness sake. And, O Lord, have I not reason to say that my guilt has increased with my years? I have walked very much in the way of my own heart, and in the sight of my eyes: I have not improved my time, talents, means of grace, and opportunities of serving and enjoying my God, as I ought. Oh! how many the sins of my thoughts, desires, affections, words, actions; how many my omissions and commissions? How many the sins of my common converse, how great the iniquity of my holy things? How defective have I been in the duty of the closet, the assembly, and the family; how many unmortified lusts have I yet to complain of? How great my pride, passion, and worldliness? I have thought of myself above what is meet; have not governed my own spirit, but anger has rested in my bosom, and the sun many a time gone down on my wrath: My conversation has not been without covetousness: I have indulged the flesh, and made provision for it to fulfil the lusts thereof: I have profaned thy name, thy day, thine ordinances; have made light of Christ, grieved thy spirit, done despite to him: I have violated the laws of justice, truth, chastity, meekness and love: I have not kept myself from mine iniquity, but have often repeated my folly and guilt, particularly in the instance of———*. And, O my God! how deeply aggravated are all my

* Here it will be proper to name (in your secret devotion) the particular sin you are most addicted to, and for which conscience oftenest rebukes you.

sins? they are against light and conviction, against promises, vows, manifold experience; against grace and love. Oh! cast an eye of pity upon me; I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I am all over as an unclean thing: As a fountain casteth out her waters, so hath my heart cast out wickedness. Lord, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes: Who can understand his errors? *Cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

* Petition for Supplies.

* And as my sins are many, so my necessities are many and great, Lord, I come to thee for a supply; I come for a blessing, a suitable and effectual blessing. Bless me, O my God! with that great blessing, the pardon of all iniquity; let my transgression be forgiven, and my sin covered; impute not iniquity unto me; blot out as a cloud my transgressions, and as a thick cloud my sins. Oh! *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow:* I have no merit to plead, but cast myself upon thy sovereign mercy in the Redeemer; thou hast declared thyself the Lord, *gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin:* Oh! may I experience that bounty and grace that is thy very nature? I am miserable, but it is my encouragement I have to do with a God of mercy: I have sinned, but Christ has died. Oh! justify me freely by thy grace, through the redemption that is in Christ. Lord, I plead the blood of atonement, accept me in the beloved: And, O heal and sanctify this sinful nature of mine! help me to put off *the old man which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness*

and true holiness; create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me: Help me to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts; that the body of sin may be destroyed, and henceforth I may not serve sin: Enlighten my mind, and grant me the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; *Open thou my eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law; teach me thy statutes, and order my steps in thy word;* so that I may be filled with the knowledge of thy will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: Subdue my will, overcome the enmity thereof; cast down lofty imaginations, and bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ; make me willing in the day of thy power: help me to *set* my *affections on things above, and not on things on the earth:* Give me a faithful conscience, an heart that will smite when I do evil; make my memory ready and strong in divine things: And Oh! that it may be furnished therewith; that the word of Christ may dwell richly in me in all wisdom. Oh! let all old things be done away, and all things become new; let the God of peace sanctify me wholly; grant that my whole spirit, soul and body, may be preserved blameless to the coming of Christ. O my God! hear my requests herein; hast thou not promised thou wilt *give* thy *holy Spirit to those who ask it;* I plead thy promise; *be it unto thy servant according to thy word.* Let thy Spirit dwell in me, as a Spirit of grace; grant me the constant supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; furnish me with all divine grace, and farther degrees thereof: May I *give all diligence, and add to my faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to patience godliness, and*

to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. Oh! may these things be in me, and abound, that I may neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant me all the fruits and graces of thy Spirit, and fulfill the work of faith, of hope, of love, and of every other grace with power: Help me to flee youthful lusts; make me sober minded; help me to put on the whole armour of God, that I may stand against the wiles of the devil; may withstand in the evil day, and having done all, be able to stand; keep me from the evil of this world, give me that faith which will overcome it: Help me to consider one thing is needful, and chuse the good part, that shall not be taken from me: May I seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof; and whilst so many say, who will shew us any good; let it be the constant language of my soul, *Lord, lift the light of thy countenance upon me:* This will put gladness into my heart. Teach me my duty in all the parts of it; that I may be complete in all the will of God, and walk in all the statutes and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Help me to discharge my duty towards my several relations, whether superiors, inferiors, or equals: Help me to love my neighbour as myself; to do to others as I would they should do to me; may I walk uprightly, speak the truth in my heart, not backbite with my tongue, nor take up a reproach against my neighbour: Clothe me with humility, and give the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, and grant I may shew all meekness towards all men: That I may do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with my God: Help me to love my enemies, and if I have ought

against any man, to forgive, as God for Christ's sake forgiveth us; to bless them that curse me, and pray for them that despitefully use me, that I may appear to be one of the children of God; who maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Oh! that here I may *be perfect, as my Father in heaven is perfect.* Help me duly to consider my latter end, often to think of death and eternity: I would not presume of long life, and talk of goods laid up for many years, of pleasures and diversions for many years; when it may be this night my soul shall be required of me. Lord, teach me to number my days, to hasten my preparation for dying; and whatever my hand finds to do, to do it *now*, without delay, and do it with all my might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave, whither I am going. Oh! that I may not trust to a death-bed repentance; nor defer the great work of religion to old age; but grant I may *remember* my *Creator in the days of* my *youth; while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when I shall say*, and find, *I have no pleasure in them.* Lord, all my wants are known to thee, all my desire is before thee; grant me my petitions, and let thy grace be sufficient for me.

* Intercession for others.

* And as thou dost require that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, which is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, I would humbly recommend the case of others to thee. Shower down, O Lord, thy blessings upon the inhabitants of this world: *May thy ways be known upon earth, and thy salvation unto all nations. Let all the people praise thee, O Lord, yea,*

let all the people praise thee ; give thy Son *the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for his possession ;* bring in the fulness of the *Gentiles*, that all *Israel* may be saved : Look down in a special manner upon this land ; be a wall of fire about us, and the glory in the midst of us. Bless the king, and all in authority under him, that thy people may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Bless the ministers of thy word ; Lord, make them faithful and successful, clothe them with salvation and success, that thy saints may shout for joy ; especially bless those under whose ministry I am placed ; bless them in their bodies, souls, studies and ministrations : Oh ! may they come to us who hear them in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ ; enable them always to speak the things that become sound doctrine, and Lord help me to profit by their endeavours. Oh ! may I be one of those who shall be their joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of Jesus Christ, at his coming ; open my heart as thou didst *Lydia*'s, that I may attend to the things that are spoken by them. Bless my parents (or family where I dwell) make an hedge about them, about their house, and all that they have on every side ; let thy candle shine on their tabernacle ; continue their life and health, and faithful endeavours for my good ; and Lord make me a comfort to them : Oh ! may I be their rejoicing, may they see me walking in the truth ; may I not prove one of those foolish children, that is the heaviness of his father and mother : Bless all my relations, friends, acquaintance ; bless them with all good things, especially with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus ; graciously pity the

afflicted, relieve and help them, [particularly, &c.*] succour the tempted, provide for the poor, and be a present help to all in time of trouble: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with their spirit.

† The dedication and surrender.

† And wilt thou, O my God, accept a poor creature that has been lying at thy foot, pleading for mercy? I am thine by many engagements; thy servant, the son of thy handmaid, devoted to thee in my infancy; I believe it was a wise and good choice my parents made when they chose thee for my God: I desire to stand to that choice, and as I have †† been often attempting to give up myself to thee, and have professed to chuse thee for my God: Lord, I would do it over again, renew and confirm my choice; and with a fuller and more perfect consent avouch thee as my God: Lord, to thee I resign and devote myself, soul, body, time, all I have and am; I would renounce every lust, hate every false way, be thine, only, entirely, and for ever thine. Accept this heart of mine, O Lord, dead and carnal as it is; thou canst change it, and fit it for thy service. O come and take full possession of my soul; admit me under thy protection, gather me under thy wing, let me dwell in thy secret place; keep me from the evil of this world; help me to set the Lord always before me; be thou at my right hand, and I shall not be moved: Lord, I am thine, save me.

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* Here mention the case of any you know in affliction, and recommend it to God.

†† This must be left out, or altered by those that cannot truly say so.

* And now, O Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee. Let thine eyes be open unto the supplication of thy servant: Thou art the God that hearest prayer, and therefore I come unto thee. O forgive the iniquity of my holy things; let all my thanksgivings, confessions and petitions, be accepted and answered: Accept my acknowledgments for

* The Conclusion.

[*To be added at morning.*]

the mercy of the night; blessed be God I laid me down and slept, and thou madest me to dwell in safety; take care of me through this day, fit me for all the duty, work, and trials of every day, and for my last day.

[*To be added at night.*]

the mercy of this day; that no evil has befallen me in it. O pardon the sin of the day in my thoughts, words, and actions; take me under thy protection this night: I would lay me down and sleep; do thou sustain me, raise me in the morning; and when I awake, may I be still with thee.

All which I beg in the name, and through the mediation of the Lord Jesus, who has taught us to pray after this manner, saying, *Our Father which art*, &c.

I have already said, I do not intend this as a stated plan, much less as a form. I cannot think it advisable for the Christian *always* to pray in this manner, in his closet; much less in these precise words. It may, however, be useful, as an introduction to prayer, exhibiting the whole in its several parts and order; and being mostly in words of scripture, may not only direct as to method, but furnish with matter and ex-

pressions; I mean it may do so sometimes, and with respect to some persons. Others do not need such prescriptions and rules, and would suffer by the confinement of them; and therefore I add,

7thly. That the most perfect manner of prayer is very much above, not only forms, but any rules of method, and is directed and conducted by the present frame and bent of the mind; and so is *extempore* in more respects than one; proceeding *pro re nata*, according to particular occasions, without being confined to any stated, prescribed words, order or matter. Sometimes the devout Christian dwells, and expatiates upon a few particulars, that his circumstances point out to him, and summon his attention to, and that his present frame leads him to. As supply for a duty and service, now before him, and which his heart is much set upon. It is not enough to mention this *incidentally* in his petition; but the main of his prayer, and often of all his prayers, for days or weeks, runs upon it. At another time, help against this or that infirmity, deliverance from an eminent trial, commands his prayer; like the *apostle*, who besought the Lord *thrice, that the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, might depart from* him, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Sometimes eminent favours in providence, outward deliverances, great enlargements, assistance and improvement in religion, draw out, and engage the affections in an extraordinary manner, and supply the prayer for a considerable while: Not that other heads of prayer are wholly neglected; but this is the predominant subject; as it fills the heart, so it in a great measure fills the prayer. Sometimes intercession for others has the like interest and

stroke in our prayers. Christ seems to have a special reference to his disciples, the difficulty and success of their office, in the prayer he was engaged in, *Luke* vi. 12. *He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night* in the oratory of *God.* It follows in the next verse, that *when it was day he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.* Before he sent them forth into the world, upon such an important, difficult service, he recommends them to God in a night of solemn prayer. His prayer, I reckon, was mostly intercession; which is sometimes the case of some of his followers, of them especially, that are blessed with the most abundant measures of the spirit of supplication, and have their minds enriched with a larger portion of divine zeal and love: They are not so taken up with the concerns of their own souls, as to overlook the concerns of others, especially the high and dear interests of the church of God. The *apostle prayed night and day* exceedingly for the *Thessalonians*, 1 Thess. iii. 10. and remembered *Timothy without ceasing in* his *prayers night and day*, 2 Tim. i. 3. Many such devout intercessors there have been, and I doubt not still are, who have their hours and days of supplication for the church, and for particular persons, one while wrestling with God, like *Monica*, the mother of *Austin*, for the conversion of this or that son, or other relation; another while pleading for farther, special, seasonable blessings. A good man used to have a stated evening every week set apart, to pray for his children and family; nor was his labour in vain in the Lord.

Sometimes the faculties being more than ordinarily excited and raised, and the force of

them drawn out and united upon these particular occasions, the soul is carried upon the wings of holy affections (I may add, often of the Holy Spirit) above prescribed rules, for either matter, order, or expression. It has a higher and more noble furniture: Such things as might be helps to others, and at other times, would be impertinent now, not only useless, but an embarrassment and hindrance. Several instances might be given of this more devout frame of soul, and of the manner in which it expresses itself. I have read of a person, that under more than common impressions of religion, would begin a prayer, and after half a quarter, or a quarter of an hour upon the knees, would fall prostrate on the face, to which he found an inclination too strong to be resisted; and thus he continued in the time of retirement for months, spending part of the time on his knees, and part in a low prostration. A soul in this posture is unquestionably above common rules; to confine him to a form would be like fettering a racer, or fastening the mountain eagle to a log of wood. The voice is here sometimes wholly suppressed; there are many silent parentheses with sighs, groans, and tears; which are so far from interrupting the prayer, that they carry it on with the greatest vigour and life. And this reckon an higher form of devotion, and the most perfect manner of prayer *in the Oratory*.

I cannot, I confess, agree with a learned person, the late author of *the Religion of Nature*. Having endeavoured to prove it better to pronounce a prayer, than only to think it over, since the very sound of the words affects us; he adds *, "It being found that we must make use of

* P. 123.

" words, it cannot be denied that we ought to " use the best and properest we can. This can- " not be done in extemporaneous effusions, and " therefore there must be forms premeditated, " the best we are capable of making or procur- " ing, if we would worship God to the best of " our capacity——. Every thing ought to be " expressed with method, in phrases that are " grave and pointing, and with such a true elo- " quence, as engages all our attention, and re- " presents our deepest sense without affectation, " or needless repetitions. These considerations " have caused me many times to wonder at " those men, who dispute against preconceived " forms of prayer. They who talk so much of " the spirit of prayer, seem to know but little " of it." So common is it for the greatest men, masters of reasoning and demonstration, in things they have been conversant with, to talk at random in things they know not, and have never tried. Devout minds, often at least, need not words *grave and pointing* to excite their affections; they bring their affections with them to the duty, and these will command words as proper as is necessary: Or if their affections are to be excited and kindled in the duty, it is from something higher and more divine than fine phrases. Not to say that the art of words, and the sound in pronouncing them, which this gentleman thinks an advantage in secret prayer, only tends to excite, what has been so often condemned as *mechanical affection*. In short, some may need the help of forms, rules of method, and a supply of matter; others are above them. And I apprehend, the most divine manner of prayer has least of these things in it. I beg leave to subjoin a passage or two from a

* Life of God in the Soul of Man, p. 97.

learned * bishop. "As there is one sort of "prayer, wherein we make use of the voice, "which is necessary in public, and may some- "times have its own advantages in private; "and another wherein, though we utter no "sound, yet we conceive the expressions, and "form the words, as it were, in our minds; so "there is a third and more sublime kind of "prayer, wherein the soul takes an higher "flight; and having collected all its forces by "long and serious meditation, it darteth itself, "if I may so speak, towards God in sighs and "groans, and thoughts, too big for expression: "As when, after a deep contemplation of the "divine perfections, appearing in all his works "of wonder, it addresseth itself to him in the "profoundest adoration of his majesty and glo- "ry: Or, when after sad reflections on its vile- "ness and miscarriages, it prostrates itself be- "fore him, with the greatest confusion and "sorrow, not daring to lift up its eyes, to utter "one word in his presence: Or, when having "well considered the beauty of holiness, and "the unspeakable felicity of those that are truly "good, it panteth after God, and sendeth up "such vigorous and ardent desires, as no words "can sufficiently express. This mental prayer "is of all other the most effectual to purify the "soul, and may be termed the great secret of "devotion, and one of the most powerful in- "struments of the divine life; and it may be, "the *apostle* hath a peculiar respect unto it, "when he saith, *that the Spirit helpeth our infir-* "*mities, making intercession for us with groanings* "*that cannot be uttered;* or as the original may "bear, that *cannot be worded.* A few of these "inward aspirations will do more than a great

" many fluent and melting expressions." I mention this not as the common attainment of Christians (though it is attainable, and what some have, at times, attained); but as an instance of the more sublime, perfect devotions, transcending not only forms, but all rules, which yet ordinarily, and to some may have their use.

8thly. Whatever variety there may be in the matter, method, and external manner of prayer, all true, acceptable, successful prayer is performed by the assistance and influence of the Holy Spirit. His concern and interest in this duty is expressed in several scriptures, and implied in more. As *Rom.* iii. 26. *Gal.* iv. 6. *Eph.* vi. 18. *Jude* xx. I know some interpret these texts so as to leave the present church little or no interest in them, placing the help of the Spirit in prayer, here spoken of, among the *Charismata*, or extraordinary gifts of the primitive church; and that were peculiar to the age of inspiration: But I am persuaded these expositors will find a large body of Christians pleading against them, not only from the laws of interpretation, but from their own experience, and that as long as the church endures. The remark of an ingenious writer is not impertinent here. " * That the gift of prayer is not expressed " among the extraordinary gifts, either *Joel* ii. " or *Acts* ii. where the prophecy of *Joel* is ac- " complished: Nor is it mentioned particularly " in the epistles of St. *Paul*, among the mira- " culous gifts of the Holy Spirit, in those places " where they are enumerated; indeed the gift " of prayer in an unknown tongue, seems to be " spoken of, 1 *Cor.* xiv. but that refers to the " gift of tongues rather than to the gift of pray- " er. And it is not unlikely that the omission

* *Watts's* Guide to Prayer, *p.* 175.

" of the gift of prayer (or praying in the Spirit) " in those texts, where the extraordinary gifts " are reckoned up, was with design to intimate, " this is none of them." Nor do I think what he adds (p. 177.) groundless. " I confess," saith he, " the Holy Spirit hath been, in a great " measure, so long departed from his churches, " that we are tempted to think all his operations " in prayer, preaching, &c. belong only to the " first ages of christianity: And it was from " this absence of the Spirit that men proceeded " to invent various methods to supply the want " of him in prayer, by *pater nosters*, *beads*, *lita-* " *nies*, &c. and other forms, some good, some " bad; to which they confined the churches to " keep up the form of worship, and the atten- " tion of the people." When the *Shechinah* of the Spirit, the inward beauty, strength, and glory of the church was in a great measure withdrawn, men substituted an image in its room to supply its place. The learned *Selden* undertakes to prove *, that the *Jews* had no forms of prayer before *Ezra*'s time, and that he, and the elders with him, composed them a form, consisting of eighteen benedictions. Nor can I discern any tolerable evidence of the use of forms in the first ages of the Christian church, till after the apostacy began, and the glory, the holy *Paraclete*, had, in a great degree, departed from *Israel*.

* *In Eutichii Alex. and. Orig.* p. 42, 43.

But I am not here to run into a controversy; nor would I be thought to insinuate that the divine Spirit doth never afford his assistance in the use of forms, I am far from thinking so. I believe all good men pray by the Spirit more or less, whether with or without forms; and that some have more of the Spirit *with forms*, than

others *without them* (though I reckon this help, if attended to, would ordinarily set Christians above them). What I am pleading for at present is, that there is an assistance of the Spirit to be expected in the duty of prayer; that this is necessary, and that it should be the endeavour of good men to secure it in all their addresses to God. Wherein it lies, how it may be discerned, the different measure of it to different persons, or to the same persons at different times, with other things which concern the full explication of the subject, must not now be inquired into. I shall only just touch a few particulars with reference to it (the Spirit's help in prayer) without enlargement.

1st. He prescribes the rules and laws of prayer, furnishes us with our *rubric*, as I may express it.

2dly. The Holy Spirit works in us those graces, and that temper of mind, by which we answer our rule in some measure: He is the author of the faith, love, humility, repentance, charity, resignation, dependence, and importunity, and all the gracious dispositions he requires in prayer: He has indited the rule of prayer, and he sets the heart to it, forms it to a correspondence therewith.

3dly. He stirs up the gift of God in us, excites his own graces, and helps us to exercise them suitably to the subject before us, the different matter of our prayer. This is so well represented by good Dr. *Watts*, that I shall borrow a paragraph from him, and therein express my own sense. " * He spiritualizes our " natural affections, and fixes them on proper " objects, and enlarges and enlightens their na- " tural activity. When sin is recollected, he " awakens anger, shame, and sorrow; when

* Guide to Prayer, p. 197.

" God is represented to the mind in his glory " and justice, he overspreads the soul with holy " awe and humble fear. When the Lord Jesus " and his redemption are upon the thoughts, " the Holy Spirit warms and raises our desire " and love. We are in ourselves cold and dead " to spiritual things; he makes us lively in " prayer, and holds us to the work; he begets " holy reverence of God, while we adore him; " he works in us delight in God, and longing " desires after him; fervency and importunity " in our petitions for spiritual mercies; sub- " mission and resignation to the will of God in " temporal things; faith in our Lord Jesus " Christ, and hope in the promises of the gos- " pel, while we plead with God for an answer " to our prayers. He also fills us with holy joy " and exultation in God, while we recollect in " prayer his glories, or his benefits, and awak- " 'ens all the springs of thanksgiving." In short, he sanctifieth both heart and frame; by the first work he gives the fundamental, habitual principles of prayer, and by the other, a present disposition and fitness for it. *We know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities*, Rom. viii. 26.

4thly. The Spirit's assistance, especially in the actual performance of the duty, is with great variety: Some have less measures of praying graces from him, as a spirit of sanctification, than others; and less of his concurrence and excitation when engaged in prayer. Oftentimes his assistance is in a calm, even way, without remarkable improvement and alteration of frame; so that his operations are not easily distinguished from the operations of our own faculties, with which they are always in conjunction,

which, it may be, is the more common case of Christians. Sometimes he assists in a more eminent, *sensible* manner, helps our infirmities, and makes intercession for us with groanings, that cannot be uttered. He elevates the mind, fixes the attention, draws out the affections, and gives that freedom and enlargement of soul, that sets us quite above ourselves at other times. And when this more special assistance is afforded, it generally brings its own evidence along with it; as we are conscious to, and feel the acts of our own minds, so we cannot but perceive the different modes of them, all their improvements and degrees of perfection. Nor do I question but some devout persons know as certainly that God is sometimes present by his Spirit, and at other times absent, as they know the sun shines, when they see its light, and enjoy its influence. They know it by inward perception and sensation; which, though it cannot be explained to strangers, is certain to themselves. Sometimes the Spirit directs to the matter of prayer, not only teaching us in general what thing we ought, in our stated addresses, to pray for, but leading us to insist on particular blessings, as specially adapted to our present case; or to such duties and difficulties as lie before us in providence; which, though we do not foresee, the intercessor in the heart doth, and hereby puts us upon laying in provision against the day of trial; when we also better know the mind and meaning of the Spirit in such excitations, and see how seasonable the importunity was we were led to. If any call this enthusiasm, &c. I can bear their censures; but shall not be ashamed to own and plead for what I take to be matter, not only of certain and solid experience,

but of considerable importance, because there are found some, that know nothing of such things, and despise them.

5thly. The general and common effect of the Spirit's assistance in prayer, is the acceptable and profitable performance of the duty. Without those graces he is the author of, we cannot pray to any purpose *(i. e.)* without faith, humility, repentance, upright intention, &c. and without the actuating them by his present influence, our prayers will, in a great measure, be dull and formal, though I do not say hypocritical, and altogether in vain. The effect of the higher assistance mentioned, is a divine ability for the duty, solemnity and seriousness of frame; inward comfort, and often holy joy and triumph of soul. This is what good men, especially the more devout, sometimes have, but not always. Few or none, I believe, can pretend to it: They are never destitute of the Spirit's help, so far as to want all praying graces in the habit; but they may want his more special, immediate assistance and influence; so that the work goes heavily on; their chariot wheels are taken off; they find and feel themselves under disability, in part; and that they cannot go forth as at other times: And though I am far from thinking the obligation to the duty now ceases, and that they ought not, or need not pray; yet unquestionably, whilst in these circumstances, the service will be low and *human*, have little of God in it, and consequently little life and comfort.

How to attain the actual concurrence and assistance of the Spirit, in the discharge of the duty of prayer; how to preserve it, improve it,

and recover it when lost, and the like, are questions that well deserve consideration, but must not here be meddled with. Nor must I farther enlarge, but leave these hints with the reader, which I hope will appear to him of too great moment to be quite neglected. As we are to pray *always*, *with all prayer and supplication*, so always *in the Spirit*, Eph. vi. 18. This we should endeavour: Our infirmities will be the fewer and less, and the less prejudicial, if the Spirit help them. Let us look up to God for his Spirit, as for other purposes, so to assist us in our constant devotions, supplying us for them, and conducting us through them. The more we depend on the intercessor within our own hearts, and the intercessor above, before the throne, the better we shall succeed in our supplications. Let us therefore wait for the promise of the father, and often plead it, *Luke* ix. 13. *That he will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

I might enforce this branch of closet religion with a great many arguments; but the reader, that has been tired with so many long discourses already, will excuse the omission of them. I must refer him to such authors as professedly, and at large, treat on the subject; and if he be serious and experienced, I may refer him to his own heart, which can say so much in behalf of this exercise, that he will not easily be prevailed with by any temptations to neglect it.

It is a part of that homage every reasonable creature owes to God; an expression of our dependence upon him, and obligations to him; and as performed in *secret*, is a direct acknowledgment of his omniscience and omnipresence, and thereby gives him the honour of those perfections. It is a law and duty of natural reli-

gion, arising out of the principle of nature, and necessarily resulting from the relation we stand in to God, as the author and maintainer of our beings, and the fountain of all our comforts; and therefore is not so much enacted and appointed in scripture, as supposed there; which yet frequently mentions it, and prescribes rules concerning it. It is recommended to us by many great and eminent examples; as that of the Lord and High Priest of our profession, *Luke* vi. 12. *Mark* i. 35; of *David*, Psal. lv. 17; of *Daniel*, chap. vi. 10. To which I might add a cloud of witnesses; indeed all that have gone to heaven, or are in the way to it: Could we peruse the register of the faithful, from the beginning of time, it would be found an eminent stroke in their character, *that they were men of prayer, and had the spirit of supplication.* The angel, in *John*'s vision, offered *incense with the prayers of all saints*, Revelat. viii. 3. *All* the saints deal in prayers, and pray *with all prayer and supplication*, Eph. vi. 18. Secret, as well as other kind of prayer, and generally most of all with that. The principle of divine life often, *first*, exerts itself in solemn, serious prayer, *Acts* ix. 11. and it constantly works the same way, and directs the eyes upwards to the throne of God, till the soul is safely lodged in heaven. *The spirit of grace* is also a spirit of supplication, *Zac.* xii. 10.

I might observe, that the occasions of the Christian require his constant attendance to this duty. Some have thought one reason why our Lord, when he prayed, withdrew from his disciples, and prayed *alone*, was because his case and theirs so much differed, that the same strain of devotion would not suit both. He

had some things to ask, they could not join in; and it is likely, some things to say it was not fit they should hear; and therefore he retired for prayer, *Mark* i. 35. *Matt.* xiv. 23. It is so with the Christian: He has necessities, complaints, many cases to lay before God, that are not proper for the cognizance of the dearest friends on earth. Here he may unbosom himself with a fervour and freedom, that public prayer doth not admit of. The devout know what I mean, and certainly he must be but a poor Christian that knows nothing of it. It is one of the most necessary instruments of religion; it helps us to use our spiritual armour, and contributes not a little to our success in our warfare, *Eph.* vi. 18. compared with the context. It derives strength and ability from above, for the performance of other duties, and communicates life and vigour to them. I reckon it matter of common experience among good men, that they find themselves more or less disposed, and fit for their respective duties and services, according as their diligence, constancy, and seriousness in secret prayer, is more or less. No other prayer, or kind of devotion can supply the want of this, or indeed well subsist without it. It opens heaven, and draws down the choicest blessings. The answers of secret prayer, which devout souls can attest, some in a common way, some extraordinary, would fill a volume. To conclude, it is a means of the purest, sublimest pleasures, we are capable of in this life. Thousands experience this; have that access to God, and intercourse with him in their secret devotions; feel that inward composure, gladness, and triumph of soul, especially in their best frames, that all the gratifica-

tions of the sensualist are ——. What shall I say? sordid and vile compared therewith. It is indeed a disgrace to make any comparison.

Reader, live no longer a stranger to thy own truest interest, happiness and comfort: Let nothing keep thee out of thy closet, and off thy knees. Prayer is our best weapon, and greatest consolation in all our troubles; the defence and retreat of the soul in the time of danger: *David* found it so in the particular difficulties he complains of, *Psal.* cix. 4. *For my love, they are my adversaries; but I give myself to prayer.* In short, prayer is our best employment, suitable and necessary in every state and condition, and should have a large place in our daily, constant devotion. As praise is the predominant, peculiar work of the church in heaven, prayer seems to be so of the church on earth. Let us therefore attend to it, be stedfast, and always abound in this work of the Lord; *enter into* our *closet*, and *pray to* our *father who is in secret, and* our *father who seeth in secret, will reward us openly*, Matt. vi. 6.

SECT. XIII.

Of Psalmody, as a Duty of the Closet or Oratory.

5thly. I know not how to close the subject about the duties of retirement, without mentioning an exercise, which, how unusual soever it may be, yet I cannot think it unsuitable to

the closet, *viz. Psalmody.* I mean by Psalmody, *the singing* of Psalms; not aloud, for that cannot become retirement and secrecy: Nor yet is it merely mental singing that I intend; but singing with the voice, a low, suppressed voice, by which we may go through all the notes of a tune with as much advantage as if we sung never so loud, as any one may be convinced that will make the experiment. We may either make use of the Psalms of *David*, or Hymns of *human composure;* or sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, as we find the matter of either most suitable to our present case, circumstances and frame.

The duty needs no explication; and as I design little more than a bare proposal of it, I shall neither offer directions to assist the practice of it, nor enlarge on motives to enforce it. It comes recommended to us by the example of the first professors of the Christian religion, and obtained very much at a time, when the zeal and devotion of the church were warmest. We find *Paul* and *Silas* hymnizing and solacing themselves with psalmody in secret, when a prison was their Oratory, *Acts* xvi. 25. Indeed psalmody was the great entertainment of the devout in the primitive church. Many of them committed the whole psalter to heart; and instead of Σαλάνικας ᾠδῆς, the devil's songs, as St. *Chrysostom* calls them, such as infect the mind and imagination, they employed themselves in reciting spiritual hymns and divine composures, which tended to purify and improve the mind. *Socrates* * saith of *Theodosius* the younger, that he could exactly repeat the holy scripture, and that rising early every morning, he used to sing praises to God. And

* *Cave's* Primitive Christian *p.* 268.

Jerome speaking of *Bethlehem*, where he lived, and which he so much extols in his letter to *Marcella*, saith, you could not go into the field, but you would hear the ploughman at his hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing *David*'s psalms. *Clemens Alexandrinus* recommends psalms and hymns, as proper before we go to bed. Many more testimonies might be produced to the same purpose. Psalmody, saith Dr. *Hammond* *, made up a very great part of the Christian's devotions, both in the public assembly, and more privately in the family, *in their retirements in the closet*, and in their waking beds.

* Pref. to Paraph. on *Psal.*

How great the advantage of the exercise would be, I had rather your experience should tell you than any discourse of mine. I have mentioned it with a desire, that the reader would make trial, if he be yet unacquainted with it. We are exhorted to be filled with the spirit, *speaking to ourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in our hearts unto the Lord*, Ephes. v. 18, 19. We should speak to ourselves, when alone, in psalms and hymns, exciting and stirring up divine affections thereby; we should often do it at other times, and especially in our Oratory, making the exercise a stated part of our devotion there. We may sometimes sing the psalm we have been reading, and bestowing reflections upon; or any other psalm or hymn that we think more suitable: Nor shall we want proper matter to supply our devotion, when we have been a little accustomed to the service. The profit and pleasure of it will be exceeding great. It tends to refresh the mind in the midst of other work; to continue and exalt the affections already

kindled; and to raise them if they are flat and low. It is a proper way of giving vent to pious affections, *James* v. 13. and equally useful to compose and cheer, when under dejection. It is an excellent intercourse with God; and, in a word, a good preparation for the higher state of religion above, in which gratulation and praise is a main ingredient: But I leave these hints with the reader without farther arguing. His practice will be the best application and improvement of them.

What place and order psalmody should have in secret devotion, I shall not take upon me to determine. Every one here may judge and chuse as he finds most expedient. You may begin with singing, or end with it; use it before or after reading or examination, *&c.* varying the order as you find best.

And thus I have gone through the several parts of closet devotion, and have given an account of the exercises in which we should be employed in our Oratory, *viz.* reading the holy scripture, meditation, examination, prayer, and psalmody. It will be thought, it may be, I have been too long upon some heads, and too short upon others; but as this is not the only, nor greatest fault in the performance, I must leave all to the reader's candour.

CHAP. III.

Of the Time of Retirement. Whether there be any special hours of devotion that may be reckoned sacred, or canonical hours: *How often we are to pray*, &c. *Whether we are obliged to go through all the work that has been mentioned, every time we retire.*

III. I PROCEED to consider the Times of Retirement, or seasons of closet devotion, when we are to enter into our Oratory and converse with God in the manner prescribed. Concerning which I shall remark the following particulars.

1st. I do not apprehend there are any hours appointed by God for devotions, and that are *divinely canonical;* no precise hour, or hours in the day set apart by God for this service; so that it is expected from us we should retire at that time rather than any other; much less any sacred hours, when our devotion will be more acceptable than at any other time. The *Jews*, it is granted, had their hours of prayer. Three of these we find mentioned in scripture. One at the third hour, or nine o'clock; another at the sixth hour, or twelve o'clock. *Peter*, a *Jewish* convert, who had been used to their times of devotion, retired to his Oratory at the same hour. *Acts* x. 9. *He went up to the*

house-top to pray about the sixth hour. Another hour of prayer was the time of their evening sacrifice, about three o'clock in the afternoon. Peter and John *went up to the temple to pray about the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour*, Acts iii. 1. *David* seems to refer to these hours of devotion in his practice, *Psal.* lv. 17. *Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray.* As also *Daniel*, chap. vi. 10. "The ancient custom, "saith *Drusius*, was to pray thrice a day; at "the third, sixth, and ninth hour. The third "answers our nine in the morning; the sixth "our twelve at noon; and the ninth our three "in the afternoon." Whence *Tertullian* * having premised that there is no time limited, but that *Christians* are at liberty to pray every where, and at all times, adds, "Yet these hours, as "they were the most remarkable in human "affairs, dividing the day, distinguishing business, and made known by public sound, so "they were the more solemn for devotion."

* Lib. de Jejun. cap. 10.

What the original, antiquity, and reason of these hours were, are questions not now to be discussed. The *Jews* pretended to derive them from the Patriarchs. The third hour, saith *R. Menachem*, was set apart by *Abraham*, the sixth by *Isaac*, and the ninth by *Jacob*, which I suppose, stands upon the same evidence with many others of their traditions, *(viz.)* their own imagination. Nor is it certain what gave rise to that practice. It is probable, two of these prayer-seasons were chose as being the hours of sacrificing. The *Jews* used to pray towards *Jerusalem* wherever they were, 1 *Kings* viii. 29. 38. 48. so *Daniel*, chap. vi. 10. And as they prayed towards the solemn place of worship to note, it may be, among other things, their ac-

knowledgment of, and communion with the God that was there worshipped, and with his worshippers; so they would pray at the time when a very solemn part of the daily stated worship, the morning and evening sacrifice was performed; looking upon these as the *mollia tempora fandi*, the more auspicious favourable seasons of addressing heaven.

The like practice was afterwards taken up in the *Christian* church, from an humour that pretty early prevailed, of modelling their worship according to the manner of the *Jewish* church. We have frequent mention among the primitive writers of the hours of prayer, which at length were multiplied and diversified according as their inclinations led them; some making six, others seven of these canonical hours; which are not only accounted sacred by the *Romanists*, but have been had in veneration by some *Protestants*, who have wrote books to accommodate the devotion of them. The more common distribution and order of them is this *, (1) The matins, or

* They that would see a particular account of the canonical hours, may consult *Johnson*'s Collection of Ecclesiastical Laws, Part 1, &c. the Exceptions of *Ecgbriht*, 23. where the seven Synaxes are reckoned up. "The first is the nocturnal Synaxis; "the second is at the first hour of the day; the third is at "what we call the third hour; the fourth at the sixth; the "fifth at the ninth; the sixth Synaxis is in the evening; the "seventh we call *Compline*. These seven Synaxes we ought "daily to offer to God with great concern for ourselves, and "for all Christian people (as the psalmist testifies, when he "saith, *seven times a day will I praise thee, because of thy "righteous judgments*), and not to omit masses, &c." The translator observes these hours were gradually introduced: that *Cl. Al.* mentions only the third, sixth, and ninth hours; that the Compline was not added till long after. Consult also the Appendix to Dr. *Hicks*'s Letters.

morning prayer. (2.) The prayer of the third hour, or nine o'clock. (3.) The sixth hour, or twelve o'clock. (4.) The ninth hour, or three o'clock. (5.) The vespers, or evening prayer. (6.) The *compliment*, or finishing prayer, to be said just before going to bed. So that they had six canonical hours, or five and a concluding collect; though indeed it was pretty usual to make them seven.

I need not stand to argue with impartial men, that all this is an arbitrary service, and can plead no higher authority than what we call ecclesiastical; nor can I look upon it any thing else than one of the common shifts to keep up something of the form of devotion, when the spirit of it was very much lost out of the church. If it be said, the *Jews* had their stated canonical hours; I answer, they used to pray while their sacrifices were offered, *Luke* i. 10. The people that attended the temple worship, prayed without at that time, and they might think it of advantage to pray at the same time elsewhere; which probably might be one reason of observing those hours. Nor is it any wonder that such converts as immediately passed out of the *Jewish* into the *Christian* church, should retain the custom they had been used to, as *Peter* and *John*, at least for a time; but that such restrictions were to continue under that gospel we have no intimation. Dr. *Whitby*'s remark* is not impertinent here. "As their (*Peter* and "*John*) going to the temple, is no precedent "for us *Christians* to perform our private devo- "tions in the church, which by our Lord's di- "rections, we rather are to do *entering into our* "*closets;* God not being so present in our "churches, as in a place of his perpetual and

* On Acts iii. 1.

" glorious residence, as he was in the taber-
" nacle and temple ; so neither is their observa-
" tion of these hours of prayer, any warrant for
" our institution of canonical hours of prayer,
" much less an evidence that the apostles, by
" going thither, did institute these canonical
" hours, as *Baronius* fancies."

The reasons some give for these canonical hours, and particularly for the number seven, which many have a very great fondness for, are peculiar ; and though not very edifying, nor, some may think, very suitable to my discourse, yet as they here fall directly in my way, I shall insert them, and that from a *Protestant* minister, where they stand without any censure, Dr. *Hicks* I mean.* " Concerning the number of the cano-
" nical hours," saith he, " the several authors
" differ who write about them. Some fix upon
" the number three, dividing the night and the
" day, each of them into four distinct offices,
" but the generality of the fathers rather chuse
" the number *seven*, grounding their choice
" upon the words of holy *David*, *Psal.* cxix. 164.
" *Seven times a-day do I praise thee because of*
" *thy righteous judgments.* And that authority
" of *David*, who being a king, and much of his
" time taken up in the regal administration, and
" yet reserved so great a part of it for the ser-
" vice of God, is not the only thing urged to
" give countenance to this number ; but there
" are likewise several other reasons alleged
" from scripture, as that of the prophet *Isaiah*,
" chap. 11. wherein are pointed out the
" seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. (1.) The
" Spirit of Wisdom. (2.) And Understanding.
" (3.) The Spirit of Counsel. (4.) And ghostly
" Strength. (5.) The Spirit of Knowledge.

* Appendix to his Letters.

" (6.) And Piety. (7.) The Spirit of an holy " and godly fear. And our old adversary takes " unto him seven other spirits wickeder than " himself, *Matt.* xii. 45. *Luke* xi. 26. against " whom we shall not be able to prevail without " the *sevenfold* grace of the Holy Spirit. There- " fore in order to obtain this *sevenfold* grace, " the church has appointed that men should " offer up a *sevenfold* sacrifice of praise to God. " Farthermore, *Prov.* xxiv. 16. it is said, *A* " *just man falleth seven times a-day, and riseth* " *again.* There are likewise *seven* deadly sins " and abominations, *Prov.* xxvii. 25. Where- " fore if any one would not fall into them, or " having fallen into them would recover him- " self, he must praise God, and beg pardon " *seven* times. Our Saviour has comprehended " the Lord's Prayer in seven petitions, and " God Almighty finished his works which he " created in seven days. These *seven* hours are " also said to be represented by the seven trum- " pets, at the sound whereof the walls of *Jeri-* " *cho* fell down, *Josh.* vi. and by the *seven* asper- " sions or sprinklings, *Lev.* 14. 51. To these " we may add the seven stars, seven churches, " and seven golden candlesticks, *Revelat.* i. " And in this point we may receive far- " ther information from several of the fathers : " As St. *Basil*, *Gregory Nazianzen*, St. *Austin*, " St. *Hierom*, &c." The reader will excuse, I hope, this ramble. I cannot but wonder, I confess, so learned a man should produce such reasons to support a practice he is zealous for, when indeed they only serve to disgrace it. What I am saying is, that under the gospel there are no particular hours every day, sacred to devotions; no precise hours in which we are obliged to at-

tend the duties of the Oratory: God has not obliged us to any, and men have no authority to do it. Here every *Christian* is to be left to his own liberty and choice.

2dly. As God has not appointed the precise hours and time of devotion every day, so neither has he told us *how often* in the day we should retire for devotion. *When thou prayest*, saith Christ, *enter into thy closet*, &c. *Matt.* vi. 6. He doth not say *how often* we must pray, only requires that *whenever* we pray, we proceed in that manner. Indeed as to the time, length, and other circumstances of devotion, a great deal is left under the gospel, to Christian prudence and zeal. As in the free-will offerings under the law, the manner of them was regulated, but the number of them was not determined: So it is with respect to the frequency of our devotions; it is expected and required that we pray, and it is appointed how we must pray; but *when* and *how often* is not prescribed. Here our necessities, occasions, love and zeal must give laws to us. And yet,

3dly. I think the scripture sufficiently intimates, that we should be *frequent* in devotion, particularly in prayer. This is the least that can be intended by those texts, wherein we are exhorted to *pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. v. 17. to *pray always with all prayer and supplication*, Ephes. vi. 18. *always pray, and not faint*, Luke xviii. 1. *watch unto prayer*, 1 Pet. iv. 7. The meaning is not that prayer should engross all our religion, much less all our time, and be our whole employment, as is said to have been the dream of some in the primitive church; but surely they must import *frequency*. He that *seldom* prays, seldom in his life, seldom in the

week, I may add seldom in the day, cannot be thought to fulfil these precepts. How often *precisely* we are to be in our Oratory engaged in devotion, we are not told: But so much is certain, that if we regard either our interests and occasions, or our rule, it must be often.

4thly. The scripture not only directs in general but to pray *often*, but to pray *daily*. This may very clearly be collected from the Lord's Prayer, which I take to be a plan of prayer, designed to instruct us in the matter, method, and order of our desires and petitions: And among other admonitions it affords us touching the discharge of this important duty, one is, that we are *every day* to be employed in it; for thus it runs,———Give us *this day* our daily bread; give us *day by day* our daily bread, *and* forgive us our trespasses, &c. We daily depend on God for our outward subsistence and supplies, and equally for daily pardon, support and defence against our spiritual enemies; which we are here taught *every day* to address our Father in heaven for. So that he who doth not pray at least *daily*, doth not act as a disciple of Christ, nor can he justly call him master.

5thly. We may farther conclude from scripture hints, that we ought to pray not only *daily*, but *twice* every day. This some have thought to be the precise meaning of the phrase, *pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. v. 17. referring to the daily sacrifice under the law, which was offered day by day continually, in the morning and in the evening of each day. "This was called "the continual sacrifice, *Dan.* viii. 11." saith a "learned man, and accordingly is rendered by "the *Septuagint* ἡ θυσία διαπαντὸς. Dan viii. 11. "Thus the Mincha* which the high priest

* Whit. in loc.

" offered every day; part of it in the morning, " and part of it in the evening, is stiled by them " ἡ θυσία διαπαντὸς. Lev. vi. 20. The burnt- " offering which was offered without intermis- " sion twice a-day, is in the *Hebrew* עלה תמיד the " continual or never-ceasing sacrifice, *Numb.* " xxviii. 24. 31." So that the scripture requiring us to pray *without ceasing*, and *always*, must be understood to intend, according to the known sense of the phrase, our praying constantly every day, and twice every day. We are to have our morning and evening sacrifice, and this continually. We should not make nor suffer the daily sacrifice to cease. And methinks there is something of a natural fitness in it, that we should thus begin and close the day with God; and so often at least every day, retire into our Oratory. How reasonable is it, that in the morning we should look up to, and adore the hand that has protected us through the night, committing ourselves to the conduct thereof in the day? And it is equally reasonable we should do the same at night, review the day, own the divine providence in it, and make acknowledgments answerable to our occasion. It is a good thing; it has a decency, a natural equity and comeliness in it, to give thanks unto the Lord, *to shew forth his loving kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night*, Psal. xcii. 1, 2. It is in every respect a good thing, acceptable to God, suitable to our circumstances, and profitable for us, and therefore should not be neglected by us.

6thly. I might observe that the examples of good men, recorded in scripture, seem to carry the matter higher, and recommended *three times* as proper to be observed in the course

of daily devotion. Thus *David*, *Psal.* lv. 17. *Evening, morning, and at noon will I pray.* And we read of *Daniel* that *he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks before God*; which it seems, was his custom and practice; for it is added, *as he did aforetime*, Dan. vi. 10. And no question the Christian may find his account in the like zeal; a short retirement at noon, when circumstances will admit of it, may be a repast in the midst of the hurries, business, and company of the day; help me to revive good impressions made by the morning devotion; recover the mind out of the world; give it a bias and turn towards divine objects, and so dispose it not only for the remaining duties of the day, but for more solemn converse with God at night. Thus the fire of the altar may be kept in alway.

7thly. I would farther suggest, that as God has not appropriated any particular hours to devotion, the time thereof is left to every one's discretion; (*i. e.*) upon a due consideration of our circumstances, we are to chuse that hour at night and morning we judge most convenient. At morning, I reckon it may ordinarily be best to prepare for devotion immediately after we rise, and not suffer any other business to intervene. At night we may be more at liberty, and should fix upon that hour which, upon experience, we find most proper. And it may be best, for some at least, to keep to their hour as far as they can, and not to be diverted by frivolous excuses; though I do not think we should be very resolute in this matter, much less bind ourselves by solemn promises or vows; as that we will spend every night such an hour, between seven and eight, or between eight and

nine, in devotion; this may prove a snare to us: Several things may fall out; unavoidable business, company, or indisposition, to render such a purpose impracticable; and therefore it is fit to be left more at liberty, and reserve room for incidents and unforeseen impediments, still guarding against slothfulness, and all unnecessary avocations. It may be well to fix the time with the latitude mentioned, and keep as close and steady to it as we can. This will be, as the *Jews* used to say of some of their own canons, *Septimentum legis*, a prudent provision against the neglect of that duty.

I will only add, 8thly. Besides the stated ordinary times of retirement, there are special occasions and times of *more solemn devotion*. When Christ was commissioning his disciples to the high and difficult office they were to be employed in, he spent a whole night in the προσευχή, or Oratory. The Christian will have many of these extraordinary occasions in the course of his life; nor will he neglect them if he be duly attentive. A time of great trial and exercise is a time of special devotion, *Jam.* v. 13. Prayer then is eminently seasonable and useful; as a means of expressing our dependence on God, subjection and resignation to him; as it tends to compose and calm the mind, and derives supports and supplies from above, &c. Accordingly it has been the practice of good men at such a time; severe temptations and trials have summoned them into their Oratories, and brought them to their knees, *Psal.* cix. 2, 3, 4. 2 *Cor.* xii. 7, 8. A time of prevailing corruption, great disorder of heart and frame, of backsliding and apostacy, loss of strength, light and comfort, is also a proper season of extraordinary

prayer. So when we have matters depending of extraordinary importance to ourselves, to others, or to both, we are then called to more than common devotions; to enter into our Oratory, and continue in it, as Christ did, all night, or all day; bespeaking with the utmost importunity his presence and conduct, and committing our affairs to him. But as this doth not fall within the compass of my present subject, but properly belongs to the extraordinary work of retirement, I shall not farther enlarge upon it, but conclude this head with an inquiry, which some may take occasion to make from what has been said, *viz.*

Is it necessary to go through all the work that has been prescribed, every time we retire; as reading the scripture, and that with such reflections as were mentioned, meditation, self-examination, prayer, and psalmody? Can it be expected from the main body of Christians, that they should have time and capacity for so much, and such manner of work in their constant closet devotion? I answer, what has been recommended is designed as a scheme and plan of the more perfect manner of closet devotion; not expecting that every Christian at all times should attend the whole of it. But to answer more distinctly,

I do suppose there may be some serious Christians that are not qualified to perform all this service with any great profit and advantage *at any time;* which is the case of persons of no education, and very mean parts. They can make little or nothing of meditation, and expounding scripture to themselves, &c. should they attempt it: And there needs no other argument to prove they are not obliged to it. We

do not serve an hard master, gathering where he has not strawed: As, *where much is given, much shall be required*, Luke xii. 48. so consequently, where little is given, little shall be required. The conclusion from inability to non-obligation is undeniable, supposing the inability be not voluntary and acquired, owing to sloth, negligence, disaffection, &c. Not but the serious Christians of ordinary parts may perform a great part of what has been prescribed. A willing mind, and a warm heart, will supply many defects of the head. We should not hastily conclude ourselves unable when we are not; time and practice may remove the difficulties we think insuperable. Though after all, some are so far unqualified for part of these exercises, that I do not think them called to them. And I am willing to own, they are not the persons for whose service this book is intended.

As there are some that can *never* go through all this work in their Oratories, so there are others that can *seldom* do it: The one want capacity, the other want time; which latter is the case of many servants, though not of all. Some have time enough to command; their business allows them vacant hours; or they might redeem an hour from their beds without prejudice to their health. They serve masters that would not grudge them a little time for religion, were they disposed to make good use of it. But others are more straitened; their business and severer masters * challenge almost the whole of the time they can spare out of

* Who seem to look upon servants only as another species of working cattle.

their beds; and it cannot be expected from these that they should daily, or often, perform all the duties of the Oratory that have been mentioned.

I add, none are *always* in such circumstances as will allow them to go through the whole prescribed. They may want time, labour under indisposition either of body or mind, or both. As when upon a journey, when fatigued by company, business, &c. when their spirits are disordered and down, &c. which may happen to the most watchful and devout. And when this is the case, I do not apprehend it their duty to attempt any more solemn devotion, as meditation, examination, &c. What lies before them at such a time, is to commit themselves to God in a serious and short prayer (at night we will suppose before they go to bed), and wait a more favourable opportunity for the rest. Negative precepts, as the schools speak, bind *ad semper;* when we are commanded not to steal, not to kill or lie, there is no part of time wherein these precepts do not oblige. But positive precepts are of a different nature: When we are bid to pray, meditate, commune with our hearts, &c. the meaning is not, that we are to be *always* employed in such duties, but at the proper times and seasons thereof.

But though there are some that can *never* go through all this *work*, others that can *seldom*, and none that can *always* do it; yet I doubt not there are great numbers of Christians that may *often* attend the whole of it ordinarily *once every day*, if it be not their own fault. One hour might suffice for all the purposes of devotion, according to the plan proposed: And certainly they must be able to give a better account of

their time, than I am afraid most can, that may justly plead they cannot spare so much from more necessary important business, for the duties of the closet. I before mentioned the practice of a good man, that used to divide the twenty-four hours of each day into three parts, allowing eight hours for refreshment, eating, sleep, &c. eight hours for the business of his particular calling, and eight hours for devotion. If this be more than the leisure of some will permit, and what the zeal of few will rise up to, yet methinks one hour in twenty-four is but a small proportion of our time. It is past question, most of us might spare so much time *ordinarily every day*, for the Oratory, without entrenching upon any necessary business: Nor shall we be found acting a reasonable part, such as will stand the examination of our own consciences, to say nothing of the tribunal of God, if we refuse it. What! have we twenty-four hours every day to spend and to account for? And shall we not redeem one of them for the Oratory! not one serious hour in twenty-four! If two hours were spent in the closet, there is twenty-two for the rest; and shall we grudge so small a portion of our time for such work; work so important, so profitable, so necessary!

But after all, that I may accommodate the discourse as much as possible, to the occasions, and even infirmities of men, I would come lower; if it should be thought, that the daily course and observation of all these duties would exceed, either the leisure or zeal of the most, I propose it may be attended *sometimes*. For instance, *twice a week*; on *Wednesday* or *Thursday* night, and on *Lord's-day* night; oftener it may be done by the generality of Christians;

it would be well to resolve that *so often, at least*, it shall be attended by all of us. The Lord's-day is sacred time, set apart for the work of our souls and another world; when we should dismiss the world, and, *vacare Deo*, essay the life of heaven. The very heathens thought the design of their festivals was τὸν νοῦν ἀπάγειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρωπινῶν ἀσχολημάτων, to withdraw the mind from secular and human business, that it might be turned πρὸς τὸν θεῖον, to subjects divine and spiritual; the solemn pause of a sabbath, or day of holy rest, should be thus improved, and consequently will not only admit of and take in such work as I have been describing, but seems to require it: We should every Lord's-day spend a considerable time in our Oratories, reading, examining, meditating, &c. an hour or two may be well employed in such exercises, and may be reckoned due to them. I also propose that some time be set apart for the same work, on another evening in the week; suppose *Wednesday* or *Thursday*. Many may be more frequent; that none should be less frequent, is what I am now insisting upon.

It cannot, with any modesty, be pretended, that this could draw too great a burden upon us. Methinks there is something so shocking in such an objection, that no Christian should know how to come into it. Two hours, twice a week, too much for solemn devotion! for converse with God, revising and settling the affairs of our soul! too much for Christians that believe eternity, and profess to make religion their business! There are in a week one hundred and sixty-eight hours. The thing now pleaded is that three or four of these be appropriated to the more solemn duties of the closet. And shall

this be esteemed too much? too much time, too much labour! What wretched stupidity and unthoughtfulness; how little value for our souls and another world must such a pretence imply! Was the thing required of us, to roll a stone up an hill, to serve as slaves in a galley, or dig in a mine months or years; there might be something in the aversion: But it is to converse with heaven, improve our minds, and refresh ourselves in the divine presence, &c. And shall two or three hours in one hundred and sixty-eight be thought too great a proportion of our time to be thus employed?

Let us briefly view the work in the whole compass of it, and see what there is in it that is burdensome, and need discourage. In the morning, after a few serious thoughts and ejaculations, when rising, dressing, &c. a chapter is read, and then follows prayer, in which some will continue a quarter of an hour; some half an hour, others more (I say nothing of the devotion at noon, or any occasional devotion in the day; and of pious ejaculations which may attend any business, company, or place). At night some review is ordinarily made of the day, in the manner before explained. Then a chapter is read, with such remarks as more easily occur to the worshipper; and the whole closed with prayer. This is the more stated, ordinary course of the Christian's devotion, with such variations, as accidental circumstances call for. Twice a week, on the Lord's-day night, and some other night an hour or two is appointed for the service of the Oratory; in which a chapter is read, with reflections, as before directed: Or a meditation attempted on a particular subject; it may be upon a sermon

that day, or lately heard. Then an examination is made of heart, conduct, frame, &c. for that day, or some days past. Then a psalm or hymn is sung, and solemn prayer concludes the exercise. I do not pretend to prescribe the precise order of these duties, any more than the length of them, I only mention how they *may* be, not saying how they *must*. And what is there in all this, to be thought tedious and burdensome? It requires no great time; an hour or two at the most will be enough to dispatch the whole of it. One hour in the daily ordinary devotion, two hours twice a week for the more solemn devotion, and the several particular exercises prescribed, will answer all I am pleading for: That is nine hours in the week: *Nine hours out of one hundred and sixty-eight!* I am forced to be thus particular, not only to explain, but to apologize for a method of devotion that may seem a little out of the way; and that not only the profane and atheistical will contemn, but the lovers of ease and pleasure, that are more accustomed to clubs than devotion, may boggle at. This, Christian, is the service I would engage thee in. If thou canst say, truly say, and wilt maintain it; that thou hast not time for it, canst not spare so many hours in the week from higher and greater things; that thou bestowest thy time every evening in better, and more necessary employment; that the work prescribed will not quit the cost, is not of so great moment as to deserve so much care and self-denial, *thou mayest neglect it;* if not, it demands thy attention; and so I leave it to thy conscience and the teaching of heaven, without farther expostulation.

CHAP. IV.

Containing several Propositions, evidencing our Obligations to worship God in Retirement.

IV. I HAVE already, in some measure, discharged this part of my undertaking, under each of the heads, which have been insisted upon; as reading the scripture, meditation, examination, &c. And therefore shall here only consider the duty *in general*, worshipping God in our Oratories, or closets; and offer some arguments to prove an obligation upon us to do this; *to retire and converse with God in secret.* The subject is somewhat nice and abstruse, and would lead to a greater compass of speculation, was it to be fully considered, than may at present be allowed, having so much exceeded in some former branches of my discourse. I shall reduce what I think proper to say within a little room, and under the following propositions.

1st. Something of religion seems essential to the human species, and inseparable from the nature of man. Man is *animale religiosum*; thus some have defined him, *a creature capable of religion*; making religion, rather than bare reason, his essential difference and distinction from the lower creatures. "The essence of man (to "express myself in the words of a good* divine) "may be said to consist in religion. There

* Bishop *Wilkins*, of Nat. Relig. *p.* 288.

" are, discernible in the actions of many brute
" creatures, some footsteps, some imperfect
" strictures and degrees of ratiocination; such
" a natural sagacity, as at least bears a near
" resemblance to reason: From whence it may
" follow, that it is not reason in general which
" is the form of human nature; but reason, as
" it is determined to actions of religion, of
" which we do not find the least signs or de-
" grees in brutes: Man being the only creature
" in this visible world, that is formed with a
" capacity of worshipping and enjoying his
" Maker. Nor is this any new opinion, but
" what several of the ancient writers, philoso-
" phers, orators, and poets too have attested;
" who make the notion of a Deity, and adora-
" tion of him, to be the true difference between
" man and beast. So * *Tully; Ex tot generibus* * De Leg.
" *nullum est animal præter hominem*, &c. Among lib. 1.
" all the living creatures there are in the world,
" there is none but man that hath any notion of
" a Deity; and among mankind there is no
" nation so wild and barbarous, but pretends to
" some religion; whence it should seem this is
" the most proper difference between man and
" beasts. And in another place, he makes this
" to be the character of that reason, which is
" the form of man, that it is *vinculum Dei et*
" *hominis*, which imports both name and thing.

" Of the same sense is that of the *Satirist*,
" who speaking of religion, and a sense of di-
" vine things, saith this of it:

——" *Separat hoc nos*
" *A grege mutorum, atque ideo venerabile soli*
" *Sortiti ingenium divinorumq; capaces.*

"It is this, saith he, which doth distinguish us "from brute creatures, that we have souls ca- "pable of divine impressions. There are "abundance of expressions to this purpose in "several other of the heathen writers. That "of * *Plutarch*, where he stples irreligion a kind "of *stupor*, whereby men are, as it were, de- "prived of their senses. And in another place "he asserts it to be an exceeding improper "thing to ascribe true reason to those who do "not acknowledge, and adore the deity. So "again, † *Tully*, *quis hunc hominem dixerit*, &c. "Why should any one style such an one a man, "who by what he sees in the world, is not con- "vinced of a deity, and of a providence, and "of the adoration due to a deity. *Non modo "non philosophos, sed nec homines quidem fuisse "dixerim* (saith another ‡) men that are desti- "tute of religion, are so far from being learned "philosophers, that they ought not to be "esteemed so much as reasonable men."

* De Superstitione.

† Nat. Deor.

‡ Lactantius.

I know it is common for those that discard religion, and set it at defiance, to pride themselves in their wit, and boast of their reason; but their boasts are vain. They are so far from being the only, or great men of reason, as they would be thought, that in reality, whilst they want religion, they forfeit all pretence to reason. They have a sort of reason, it is granted, and so have the brutes. A spaniel, monkey, and baboon can do feats; can sport and play, eat, drink, and propagate their kind: And though the reason of these men reaches farther, and rises somewhat higher; yet, whilst it doth not lead them to God, but stops short of religion, it cannot be called the divine rea-

son, which is the distinction of a superior species and order * of creatures: Nor can I see but the soul of some of the more sagacious brutes, in a body organized as the human body is, might serve most of the purposes the persons I am speaking of live for. In short, reason, as it is the characteristic of man, is in conjunction with religion; it is a ray of divinity, and will direct the mind upward, and tend to its original, if it be not suppressed or extinguished. And where it is without this tendency, and destitute of religion, it must be looked upon as having degenerated into sensual and brutish; leaving the possessor in the classes of the brutes; for though he retain the name, the erect figure and outward shape of man, he has put off the nature, and wants the inward principle and form of man.

* *Sanctius his animal*, &c.

2dly. As religion is essential to man, acting as such, and according to the constitution and frame of his nature, so divine worship is essential to religion, and consequently essential to man as a religious creature. Every reasonable creature is bound to worship, esteem, love, serve, and adore the Supreme Being. The obligation to this might be demonstrated. There is a sort of honour and respect due to every being, according to the measure of excellency it is possessed of. Where there is great power, with great wisdom and goodness, and these displayed in numerous, constant instances, a proportionable deference and worship becomes due. We owe love and honour to a wise and good man, one of eminent accomplishments and character; more to an angel; and still more and more, as any being is distinguished and advanced in the scale of perfection. Now

as God has all possible perfections, all excellencies, and in the highest degree, worship, divine supreme worship (which properly lies in agnizing, and acknowledging these perfections with suitable devotion) is due to him, from every being capable of discerning them, and to whom they are made known.

And this is the more due, and the obligation to it confirmed, when that being is God's creature; deriving all its powers and capacities from him, and subsisting by his care; which is the case of man. *In him we live, and move, and are.* Our beings are from him; he furnished us with our faculties; he sustains us every moment, and by his visitation upholds our spirit. He supplies all our wants, bestows all our comforts, and performs all things for us. In short, he is not only the greatest and best of beings, but our maker, preserver, and constant benefactor, from whence results an undeniable obligation to acknowledge and worship him. *Let us worship and bow down*, saith the *Psalmist, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Psal. xcv. 6. So *Psal.* c. *He hath made us;* it follows, *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him, and bless his name*, ver. 3, 4. As he made us, he has an undoubted right to our homage and worship. Accordingly, we find he challenges it, upon principles of common equity, and such as are allowed universally, among mankind, in the relations they stand in one to another, *Mal.* i. 6. *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: If then I be a father, where is my honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?*

So that to worship God, to own his providence, celebrate his perfections, express our

dependence upon him, pray to him in our wants, give him praise for his benefits, and pay him all suitable homage, is a necessary duty arising out of the nature of things; the obligation to which can never cease, whilst things continue as they are between God and man: That is, while God continues what he is; a being of absolute perfection; the Creator, sovereign governor, and constant benefactor of the world: And while man continues what he is, God's creature, deriving all from him, and depending upon him; and hence it may be it is, that we have no more express institution and appointment of divine worship in its several kinds in scripture. The Bible rather supposes than commands it; refers to it as a known, confessed thing; known, *a priori*, antecedently to supernatural revelation, as being part of νόμος ἔμψυχος, the internal law, written in the heart, and legible to all. In short, to worship God is the duty of every reasonable creature, natural, necessary, and unchangeable, and known by the light of reason.

3dly. Not only worship, in general, but *secret* worship may be considered as a necessary duty of every reasonable creature; the obligation to which may also be evinced from the light of nature, and principles of reason. It not only has peculiar advantages, as it affords greater liberty for particular persons to transact with God their particular, special affairs; to lay before him their personal grievances, complaints and wants, and insist on cases proper to themselves, after another manner than can be done in social worship, which is a circumstance that doth not a little recommend it; but it tends to the honour of God in a special manner; it gives him the glory of some of his attributes,

of his omnipresence and omniscience, for instance, more than public worship doth: Hereby we acknowledge that *he sees in secret:* Hereby also we own his providence, not only in general, but in particular; that he takes care of individuals, interests himself in our matters, and declares our dependence upon him, and obligations to him in particular. In social, public worship, we celebrate him as *a common* benefactor; in secret worship, we own special obligations. Not to say that secret worship carries in it, at least, a greater appearance of sincerity, than social. A person may join in public assemblies upon motives that have nothing of God and religion in them; but when he addresses himself to God in retirement, there is less temptation to act a part, and play the hypocrite: The business is now off the theatre, and carried on in a manner that implies, one would think, (though it is granted hypocrisy may creep in here) a real conviction of the divine presence, providence and government, and of the worshipper's dependence, &c. So that there seems to be something in the circumstance of this sort of worship *as secret*, that enforces the obligation of it. Every one, as he has his private, particular wants, blessings, and various distinct cases, ought to carry these before God, and worship in secret.

4thly. Though the scripture, as I said, rather supposes secret worship a duty, than expressly institutes it, yet the mention it makes of it, the rules it lays down for the discharge of it, not only imply, but confirm our obligation to it. The reader that is acquainted with his Bible, and with the subject, knows how much it insists on the duties of worship, prayer, praise, &c. It gives several hints concerning the fre-

quency of these duties, particularly of prayer; as, that we *pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. v. 17. *Pray always, with all prayer and supplication*, Ephes. vi. 18. It recommends the duty in general, *that men pray every where lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Christ requires of his disciples, that they *enter into their closet, and pray to their Father in secret*, Mat. vi. 6. It gives many directions for the management of devotion. The book of *Psalms* abounds with precepts, rules and examples, relating to prayer, praise and meditation, and is indeed mostly a collection of the materials of secret devotion. It intimates the necessity of such exercises, and makes the neglect of them the character of hypocrites and the ungodly, *Job* xv. 4. *Job* xxvii. 10. *Psal.* x. 4. *Psal.* xiv. 4. *Jer.* x. 25. In short, the Bible is full of the subject (secret devotion) of precepts, rules, motives relating to it; so that if we regard either the voice of nature or scripture, we must receive it as a duty. He that has no Oratory, and is not a man of devotion, at once violates the principles of his own mind and conscience, and despises the authority of God in his word.

5thly. So full is the evidence of this duty (of conversing with God in secret) and so general the conviction of it, that it appears to have been the constant practice of the church of God, and of all the sincere genuine members of it, in every age of the world. Indeed the history of the first ages of the church, for some thousand years, is transmitted to us in short memoirs and general hints, that no distinct account of their private devotion can be expected: But so much is said of them, as gives us reason to conclude, that all the faithful, all good men,

were then, as ever since, men of devotion. *Adam*, no question, was often employed in conversing with God, during his innocency, as may be probably inferred from what he saith, *Gen.* iii. 10. *I heard thy voice in the garden, and was afraid, and hid myself.* He had been accustomed to the voice of God: Having, it is likely, had frequent intercourse with him. He had been used to hear from God (and, no doubt, speak to him) and therefore knows his voice as soon as he heard it. Nor can we question but *Abel*, *Seth*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, and other pious men of that time, enjoyed the like privilege; especially when it is said of some of them, particularly of *Enoch* and *Noah*, *that they walked with God;* which certainly must imply *mutual converse;* gracious vouchsafements on God's part, and much devotion on theirs. *Abraham*, that is so much distinguished in the annals of the church, and represented as the father of the faithful, was a person of devotion. He maintained frequently intercourse with heaven, *Gen. chap.* xv. *chap.* xvii. In the third verse, we find him on his face, and God talking with him. He intercedes for *Sodom*, *chap.* xviii. 23, and for *Abimelech*, *chap.* xx. 17. If it be objected these are rather instances of occasional than constant devotion; we read afterwards, that when he had got some little settlement at *Beersheba*, he immediately prepared himself an Oratory for stated devotion, as is probable. *Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the Lord, the everlasting God*, Gen. xxi. 33. It seems to have been a sort of a *proseuche*, or place for retired worship. There *Abraham called upon God*, and spent many hours, no doubt, in solemn

devotion: And it would seem that several members of his family were trained up to devotion; something of this may be inferred from the behaviour of his servant *Eleazar*, upon a particular occasion, *Gen.* xxiv. 12. *&c.* He addresses himself to God like one that was no stranger to such employment. So *Isaac*, Gen. xxiv. 63. It is said he *went out to meditate* (or pray, and it is likely to do both) *in the field at the even-tide:* He spent part of his evenings in meditation and prayer, which we may suppose was his common practice. And how like a man of religion and devotion was that we read of, *Gen.* xxv. 21. *Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was intreated of him.* The same spirit of devotion appears in *Jacob;* witness what passed at *Bethel*, Gen. xxviii. 16. to the end; at *Mahanaim*, Gen. xxxii. 9.——13. With how much strength and skill doth he plead with God? In 24 and 26th verses, we find him alone wrestling with the angel: It is plain, how much soever the body might be concerned, the mind was also in the conflict; he wrestled for a blessing, *ver.* 26. and how he wrestled the prophet tells us, *Hos.* xii. 4. *He wept, and made supplication to him.* "The patriarch," saith *Mons.* * *Saurin*, "after having taken the steps "prudence suggested to him for his safety, "was desirous to spend a few moments in re- "tirement, perhaps to recollect his thoughts, "and betake himself once again to prayer. In "these holy exercises God communicates him- "self to the soul after the most intimate man- "ner; and in such he gave the ancient pa- "triarchs the most sensible marks of his pre- "sence, and of his love." It seems he did so

* Dissertat. on N. T. p. 241.

to *Jacob* on this occasion, in a very eminent manner. Hence both the supplicant and place receive a new name, but a little honourable. *Jacob* is called *Israel*, and *Jabbock* is called PENIEL, *i. e.* the face of God; for, saith he, *I have seen God face to face*, ver. 30. Glorious was the combat in which the poor weeping supplicant becomes a conqueror, and, as a prince, has power with God and prevails. No doubt, the good man would remember *Peniel* as long as he lived, and often desire to see the face of God in the like exercises. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of *Noah*, *Job*, *Daniel*, of *David*, of *Samuel* also, and of the prophets: Some of these the scripture distinguishes as persons of more than ordinary piety and devotion; as *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job*, Ezek. xiv. 14. *Moses* and *Samuel*, Jer. xv. 1. And though we have but a few sketches, short memoirs of their religion, yet so much is said of them, as shews they were persons of great eminency, particularly for devotion.

Noah has this character, that *he walked with God*. *Daniel* was a special favourite of God; had not only extraordinary intimacy with God in prayer, but signal answers of prayer; was admitted into the secret counsel of heaven, *Dan.* ii. 17, 18, 19. had an angel sent him, to give him assurance that his prayer was accepted, and that he was a person greatly beloved, *chap.* ix. 20, 21, 22, 23. And besides his extraordinary devotions, he had his stated periods thereof *three times a day*; which he attended with a resolution that no dangers could divert him from. When he knew that the decree *was signed*, *he went into his house*, *and his windows being open towards* Jerusalem,

he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime, Dan. vi. 10. No terrors could make him omit his devotion, nor change the course and method of it. And one may infer *Job*'s eminency in this duty, and from other passages in his book; so particularly from this, that God himself appoints and accepts him as an advocate for his friends. *My wrath*, saith the Lord to *Eliphaz*, *is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; therefore take unto you seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant* Job, *and my servant* Job *shall pray for you, for him will I accept*, Job xlii. 7, 8. Which was an high honour put upon this holy man, and imports not only his great interest in God, but eminency in prayer. And how powerful an intercessor with God was *Moses?* Let the reader consult the following texts for a proof of this, *Exod. chap.* viii. 12. 30. *chap.* ix. 33. *chap.* x. 18. *chap.* xiv. 15. *chap.* xv. 25. *chap.* xxxii. 10. 30, 31. *Let me alone*, saith God, *that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them*, *chap.* xxxiv. 9. *Numb.* xiv. 13. *Samuel* is also mentioned among these worthies, and that deservedly, 1 *Sam. chap.* viii. 6, 7, 8, &c. *chap.* xii. 18. 23.

And the same might be observed of *David*. The book of Psalms is full of his private devotions. Indeed almost every providence brought him into his Oratory; as every place was a sort of Oratory to him; *Adullam*, *Engedi*, *Mezan*, *Olivet*, *Maon*. He was constant and frequent therein. *In the morning*, *Psal.* v. 3. *Psal.* lix. 16. *Psal.* lxxxviii. 13. *At evening, and at noon*, *Psal.* lv. 17. He lived in devotion, *Psal.* cxix. 164. *Psal.* cix. 4. *Psal.* xxxiv. 1. and, as it

were, expired in it, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. In short, this has been the temper of all good men, more or less, *Josh.* vii. 7, 8, 9. 1 *Sam.* i. 10, 11. 1 *Kings* v. 17. *James* v. 17, 18. *Nehem.* i. 4. *Esther* iv. 3. 16. *&c.* Devotion is inseparable from the true church, and real members of it: *God inhabiteth the praises of* Israel, *Psal.* xxii. 3. Is the *God that heareth prayer, to whom all flesh shall come*, Psal. lxv. 2. It is mentioned as part of the character of the pious *Jews*, that they were men of prayer, *Psal.* xxiv. 6. *This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O God of* Jacob. That generation he had described, who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who have clean hands and a pure heart; all of them are *seekers of God*, as *Jacob* was: They are *Israelites*, men of worship and devotion. And it is observable that the proselytes, such as were serious among them, walked in the same steps, and in the same spirit. Thus we read of *Cornelius*, that he was a devout man, *and prayed alway*, Acts x. 2. He had his stated, and also his extraordinary hours of prayer, when he joined fasting with prayer, *ver.* 33. This was to act like a genuine member of the church; one that not only embraced the profession, but was initiated into the religion of the Church.

And should I go on to consider the character, the temper and practice of the members of the Christian church, we should find them all under the same bias and bent of mind towards God and devotion: *Behold he prayeth*, saith the Lord to *Ananias*, concerning *Saul* the persecutor, now a convert; and the same may be observed of every true convert in the world. Particular instances here are needless; we are com-

passed about with a cloud of witnesses. I appeal to the whole community of the faithful in this matter; though all are not alike devout, yet all know something of devotion, and live in the exercise of it. Christ supposes his disciples would pray, and therefore gives them rules for the performance of the duty, *Matt.* vi. 6. and the apostle makes it part of the description of Christians, *that they call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*, 1 Cor. i. 2. Christians are men of prayer and devotion; always were so, and always will be so to the end of the world. The New Testament affords us such hints as will warrant us to conclude this concerning them; and the history of the church confirms it. Devotion has ever been an eminent part of the character of the Christian church, in which some have exceeded. *Eusebius* saith of *James* the Just, that his knees became hard and brawny by frequent devotion; and the same *Nazianzen* notes of his sister *Gorgonia*. The historian saith of *Constantine* the emperor, that though he was burdened with the cares of so vast an empire, yet he would every day, at his wonted hours, retire into his closet, and upon his knees offer up his prayers to God. And to manifest to the world, that he was not ashamed of his duty, and let them know what it was he chiefly delighted in, he caused his image in all his gold coins, pictures and statutes, to be represented in the posture of a person praying, with his hands spread abroad, and his eyes lifted up towards heaven. It is said of him, that he accounted it a greater honour to be a member of the church than head of the empire: And how like such an one doth he seem whilst in

Cave's primitive Christians, part I. p. 267.

this posture? But I need not produce particular instances in a case I suppose general. The argument is, that what has been the practice of the church of God in all ages of the world, must be looked upon as matter of duty to all the members of the church. Man is a religious, a worshipping creature; so by the frame and constitution of his mind; all the faithful have been more or less persons of devotion; consequently such as are strangers to it, and live without it, have no reason to reckon themselves of the number.

6thly. As the members of the church have from age to age lived in devotion, and maintained intercourse with God, so the glorious head of the church, the Son of God, when he came into the world, was an eminent example of devotion, of secret devotion. He often withdrew from company, and from his disciples, and prayed alone: When he had sent the multitude away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray, saith *Matthew*, chap. xiv. 23. So chap. xxvi. 36—45. He withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed, *Luke* v. 16. *Mark* tells us, that in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he departed into a solitary place, and there prayed, ch. i. 35. And in the text it is said, *he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in the Oratory of God*, Luke vi. 12. He had his hands full of work all day, of religious work, divine work; but that doth not excuse him from the duties of retirement. At one time he is up all night in his Oratory; at another time he rises a great while before day to get into it; he would rather want time for sleep than prayer. And how loud an admonition is this to us? How great a conviction of

the obligation of the duty? If it be said he had more difficult work to go through, than we: I answer he had a proportionable unction and ability; a more constant habitual fitness for any service: He was called, though he had no corruptions or disorders of frame; no sinful aversion to pray against; and yet how constant a supplicant: and how importunate? *Heb.* v. 7. That herein he might have regard to his own occasions, was before supposed; but no question, he also, if not chiefly, designed our instruction, and to set us an example, that we should do as he has done; as he saith in another case, *John* xiii. 15. Nor are we his disciples, unless we imitate him in this, as well as other excellencies, and have something of the same mind in us, that was also in him.

7thly. Such is the state and condition of Christians, their dependence on God; their insufficiency of themselves, for the work and business of religion, without recruits and supplies from above, that the plea of necessity in this case is enough to prove the duty before us, and indeed may supersede all farther arguments. If it be asked how I will prove it is a man's duty to eat, drink, and sleep? I answer, because he cannot otherwise live: It is his duty to preserve his life, and these are necessary means thereof, and so it is here. The exercises of retirement, meditation, prayer, *&c.* are the appointed means of deriving all kind of spiritual supplies from above. Hereby the Christian is strengthened for his warfare, enabled to encounter and stand against his enemies, *Eph.* vi. 12—18. Hereby he gets his mind fortified against the world, and the impression of sensible things; his heart poised and ballasted; his cor-

ruptions subdued, and passions kept in some *decorum;* and in a word, hereby he obtains assistance answerable to his occasions, grace to help in time of need. I dare appeal to all serious, sensible persons in the world in this matter, whether they do not find that religion prospers or decays in the soul, according to their constancy and diligence in the duties of the closet; and that while they continue with their hands lifted up in their Oratory, they prevail against their enemies; but when they are let down, their enemies prevail, to allude to that *Exod.* xvii. 11. In short, our graces will languish, and spirits flag, unless refreshed by constant intercourse with the great paternal Spirit. Even the soul of Christ, though in a state of innocence and perfection, had so much feeling of its dependence, as to seek supports, supplies and comfort from his God and Father, by constant devotion. And can we think to be safe in the midst of so many dangers; to be successful in religion, bear up against the mighty opposition of our enemies without, and a dead weight of corruption within, in the neglect of the same means?

In a word, the duties I have been recommending, are not only part of the homage we owe to God, as his creatures, but part of the necessary care we owe to ourselves: And as we are new creatures, may be placed among the principles of self-preservation. To neglect them, is to neglect the means of our safety and spiritual life; and indeed if the neglect be total, it argues us destitute of life. A Christian without his Oratory, without converse with heaven, is but the image of a Christian; he is like a man in arras, a poor, meagre lifeless thing: So that

this argument may be reckoned conclusive, and I shall close the head with it, that we ought to maintain intercourse with God in retirement, because that is our strength and our life.

CHAP. V.

The Conclusion. The Duties of the Oratory recommended, especially to three sorts of persons. Directions and Helps for carrying on the prescribed method of Closet-Devotion. Some objections answered.

It is no small part of my work that is behind, should I pursue my intention, *viz.* to shew the excellency and many advantages of a devout temper: To direct how to acquire, preserve and improve it: To take notice of the chief impediments of it, with cautions against them. But as I think it necessary to put an end to the discourse as soon as possible, though it be somewhat abruptly, I shall omit these things, and no farther trespass on the reader's patience, only beg leave to recommend the proposed method of closet-religion very briefly to three sorts of persons especially.

(1.) To ministers. There is no mean sense in the saying of *Luther*, that three things make a minister, *meditation, temptation and prayer.*

The more we converse with God and our own heart, the fitter we shall be for the duties of our function: These retired exercises will derive strength and ability for public performances, and give them another sort of a life, than the dry discourses of common orators; both the speaker and hearer knows this to be true. In short, our work demands it of us, that we be much in our Oratories; our comfort, and in a great measure our success depends upon it. And methinks it is no small admonition to us, that our great Master, after he had spent the day in the public duties of his office, preaching, working miracles, &c. so often retired, and spent the whole, or part of night in secret devotion: If he needed such exercises, how much more do we? It is indeed the great advantage of our profession, that it gives us a recess from the world, and special opportunity for conversing with God and spiritual subjects; and it exceedingly concerns us to improve it for this purpose, and not suffer our spirits to be too much tinctured of the world, and our time wasted in worldly pursuits, company, diversions, &c. Ministers are called *angels*, and should, like them, be always beholding the face of their Father in heaven, or ministering to men on earth. It is not my design to enlarge here: Nor shall I take upon me to teach those, of whom I ought and desire to learn, but I beg leave to say, we are very unlike *men of God*, if we have little converse with God. As we speak to men in the name of God, we should *come from God*, when we speak to them, if we would be heard.

(2.) Another sort of persons to whom especially I would recommend these duties, is the men of estates and education, that are free from

the confinements of trades and callings. These ordinarily have time enough at command; and indeed would be at a loss, many of them, how to dispose of it, did not their diversions and pleasures come in to their assistance. They have ten or twelve or more hours every day lying upon their hands, void of any incumbrance, but what they unnecessarily bring upon themselves; and how inexcusable must they be, if they cannot find an hour or two in twenty-four for the Oratory, for the affairs of religion, of their souls and eternity? The plea of *gentlemen* will serve for nothing, but to aggravate the guilt of their pride, sloth, neglect and perversion of talents. There is a natural equity in that of our Saviour, *Luke* xii. 48. *To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required;* and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. These persons have more time, capacity, helps, and more opportunity for religion than others, and therefore ought to attend it the more diligently; and if they do not, their accounts at last will be but uncomfortable.

(3.) The same may be said of persons of fulness in the world, though engaged in business. They have callings to mind, but the bounty of providence has freed them from drudgery: They do not eat the bread of carefulness and sorrow, but have time enough for necessary business and necessary devotion. If they do not find it so, the reason is mismanagement; they do not rightly divide their time between this world and the next, allowing to each a due proportion, but love the world better than their souls, and therefore for the sake of the one neglect the other.

I might largely expostulate with these and the others beforementioned, men of substance and estate, whether in callings, or out of them: Consider God expects more from you; more time spent in devotions, than from any others. Under the law regard was had to the circumstances of persons in their sacrifices: Such whose poverty would not allow them a more costly offering, might bring turtles or pigeons, *Lev.* xii. 8. So it is with reference to our spiritual sacrifices under the gospel. They that want leisure or parts, their meaner and shorter services in the Oratory may be effectual to obtain blessings and comforts, and be accepted of God; but where persons have more time and ability, better things are expected from them. God will despise their corrupt thing, when they have a male in the flock. A quarter of an hour may, by the special blessing of God, to be hoped for in such a case, turn to a better account with a servant or poor labourer, that knows not how to redeem more, than an hour with those that have their whole time at their own disposal.

I might add, your occasions make these duties exceedingly necessary; riches and fulness administer to pride and luxury; betray persons into innumerable temptations; engage them much in worldly commerce and company; all of which make retirement, recollection, and frequent devotion necessary; the Christian, in such circumstances, cannot be safe without it, he will soon be off his basis and guard, and lose its frame, if he neglect it: I dare appeal for this to all the serious part of mankind. It is a gross mistake to think religion and devotion belongs only to secluses, men shut up in cloisters, or whose business is study and contemplation:

None need it more than *seculars*, men of the world, and that are much conversant in the world. Even Christ himself, when he had been in the world (though not about the affairs of the world) the greatest part of the day, saw occasion to sequester, and get alone at night in his Oratory: and can we be safe without such divine auxiliaries? we, who are more exposed to temptations, and are less able to bear them.

Once more, consider the main good of an estate lies in its subserviency to the ends of religion. There are two things chiefly that an estate is valuable for, as it gives a man an opportunity of being useful in the world, rich in good works, and sowing more liberally for eternity, and affords him more leisure and help for devotion, cultivating his own mind, conversing with God, and waiting on all the means and ministries of religion. If both these be neglected, an estate is a curse, and not a blessing, and the owner will wish, and wish again, that he had served God in poverty and rags, rather than have been full and denied him. I know men of a worldly spirit and taste, that have no higher principle than sense, and judge of all things from their convenience to their appetites, will not come into this; but it is nevertheless true for all that, and they will find it so at last.

Well consider these things, and attend to your duty: Whilst you do so, you are serving your own interest in the most effectual manner, and improving the advantage of that station, and those circumstances the providence of God has placed you in; otherwise your riches, plenty, and leisure is lost, and will only run into your future account to enhance your guilt and condemnation. To conclude, all of us are more or

less concerned in these duties, and consequently in the exhortation, and so I would be understood; for though I have mentioned some persons, as having special advantages for them, and on that account, more peculiarly obliged to them; yet others, that do not come within these distinctions, should look upon themselves concerned, some more than others, but all in some degree, according to their capacity and leisure; but thyself render into the number. It is a good work I would engage thee in, an honourable and profitable work; if thou hast neglected it, neglect it no longer; if thou hast been inconstant, partial, and defective, confining thy devotion to one branch, as prayer for instance, do so no more, but endeavour to extend thy devotion in the manner prescribed. Provide an Oratory, get it suitably furnished with such books as may be helpful, and make the best use of them thou canst: Remember that of the psalmist, *Psal.* xcii. 1, 2. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praise unto thy name, O Most High; to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* And again, *Psal.* lv. 17. *Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.* Let your conversation be in heaven, in this respect; your traffic and commerce there; suffer no day to pass without intercourse with God in the duties of worship; reading the scripture, prayer, meditation, &c. and have your times for the more thorough and solemn discharge of these offices, as before advised.

Arguments and motives, how much soever due to the subject, I cannot now make room for, and therefore shall shut up all with a few

directions, which I shall leave with such as are desirous to pursue this scheme and method of devotion, and are solicitous about a fitness for it.

(1.) Endeavour for a spirit of devotion; for a temper and frame that suits work of this kind; the foundation of which is laid in sanctification, or the inward renewing of our natures. This is absolutely necessary to the performance of religious duties with success, particularly those of solemn worship. Except a man be born again, born of water and the Spirit, saith Christ, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, *John* iii. 3. 5. *i. e.* as some understand it, he cannot be a member of the *Messiah*'s kingdom, or of the Christian church. He is not qualified to discharge the duties, nor partake of the privileges of it. All the members of the church, as I before hinted, are in their several degrees men of devotion, and accordingly have a new and divine nature, principles adapted to religion, they are not of the world, but chosen and taken out of it; distinguished by another, an higher and more excellent spirit, which they have received, savouring the things of God, 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. They are temples of the Holy Ghost, consecrated to worship, and disposed for heavenly converse. *God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying Abba Father*, Gal. iv. 6. Labour that you may be such true *churchmen*, having the heart and temper of the church, otherwise the duties of solemn worship will be your aversion and burden; you will be reprobate to them. You may sometimes be carried to them by external impulse and motives, but wanting the inward principle, all your service

will have but a shadow of devotion ; be unsteady and formal, without heart and life. The hypocrite cannot delight himself in the Almighty, nor will he always call upon God, *Job* xxvii. 10. I might observe besides this fundamental requisite the truth of grace in the heart, some improvement in grace is also necessary, and included in the spirit of devotion. It notes a mind happily turned this way, bent for devotion ; competent skill and ability for the work ; freedom and delight in it ; an heart following hard after God, tuned and set for this heavenly employment ; that knows how to relish the pleasures of worship, and triumph therein. Pray for and get such an heart, and the business is done ; arguments and indeed farther directions will be in a great measure needless. If you want such an heart, beg for it with the utmost importunity, and rest not till you have obtained it. Make great account of a devotional temper ; value the least improvement of this kind more than all earthly riches and honours : And if you thus seek the blessing, with this esteem and preference of it, you shall not long want it. God will give his Holy Spirit to them that in this manner ask it, *Luke* xi. 13.

(2dly.) Accustom yourselves to retirement, and to solemn converse with God therein : Not only be patient of it, but endeavour to love it, and delight in it. Guard against every thing that would keep you out of your Oratory ! Sloth, ease, excess of worldly business, diversions, pleasures, company, *&c.* The conversation of our friends, that most agreeable enjoyment, must be used with caution. *Amici fures temporis*, saith Lord *Bacon ;* friends often rob us of

our time; we should take care they do not rob us of our best time, the sacred hours of devotion. Frequent evening visits, games, and clubs must be watched against. Self-denial must be exercised in these and other matters, and an holy resolution put on, if we would engage in, and follow the method of devotion prescribed. In short, make such exercises your chief solace and comfort, and you will not admit every little vocation and excuse from them. And methinks the importance and advantage of the work should carry in it its own security; here the soul trims and decks for heaven, and wipes off the sullage it contracts by worldly converse, and intermixing so much with things below. Many may join in *Seneca*'s complaint, "*nunquam a turba mores quos extuli refero, aliquid ex eo quod composui turbatur*, &c. I can seldom preserve my manners and temper in a crowd of company: I find something or other disordered, I had endeavoured to set right. Much conversation is hurtful to me." Now in retirement we recover ourselves, wind up the depressed mind towards heaven, and get the frame rectified again. I mean it gives us an opportunity of doing this; has this tendency, and, by the blessing of God, will have this effect. Innumerable indeed are the advantages of devout retirement; endeavour to understand what they are, that your experience may invite you, and your affections keep you to it; so that it may become your entertainment, and then, no question it will be your practice.

(3dly.) Make the devotion of the closet subservient to an holy life, a means of promoting and advancing it, in all the branches thereof. If

your devotion make you proud, censorious, uncharitable, sour, and unsociable; ready to justify yourselves, and despise others, and to say, stand by thyself, I am holier than thou; much more if you take encouragement from thence to acts of injustice, fraud, or fleshly indulgence, it is a false devotion, and looks like the sacrifice of the wicked, which is an abomination to the Lord. The frequent reviews we make of ourselves, of our hearts and lives in our closets, should be in order to correct the irregularities and indecencies thereof. We converse with God and ourselves that we may be the better fitted to converse with others. Our private censures, with the penitential acknowledgments that accompany them, tend to polish and refine us, and shew us to the world without spot, or with fewer spots; with a clothing of wrought gold, shining in all the graces of the divine Spirit, meek, humble, courteous, kind, and beneficent; let us endeavour, that it may be so with us: *Non est vera religio, quæ cum templo relinquitur;* it is not true religion, saith *Lactantius*, which a man leaves behind him at church; and the same may be said of the closet; true religion is not confined there, but issues forth, and by its streams refreshes and adorns the conversation. The devotion of the closet should appear in its good effects in our conduct out of it; in the constant integrity and usefulness of our converse; I may add, in the serenity of our minds, and cheerfulness of our behaviour. A cloudy face is far from being the natural result of true devotion; it rather tends to paint the countenance with rays of divine light and joy, and give a lustre to it that is amiable and invit-

ing, than fill it with frightful glooms. Certainly none in the world have so much cause to be cheerful, as holy and devout men. They that have a good God, and a good conscience to converse with, and are upon good terms with both, have a continual feast; and no doubt, it becomes them to be merry at it. But I must not enlarge here, nor add farther directions, nor can I distinctly answer the *objections* some may pretend to make against this method of devotion. I call them pretended, because I reckon them rather excuses for sloth and disaffection than real reasons, even in the judgment of the objectors themselves.

Some object want of time; and I before allowed this would excuse, when it can truly be pleaded. Not that I suppose any Christians can want time for all devotion, so much as a short prayer; but some may want time for reading, meditation, *&c.* and from these less will be accepted. But how few can, with any modesty, join in this pretence? I leave the reader to consult his own conscience, and answer for himself whether he can or not; whether he cannot every day redeem one hour in twenty-four for the Oratory, or at least twice a week as was proposed.

Some may object, this is more than needs. A man may get to heaven without so much ado: But methinks this pretence ill becomes Christians that profess to believe eternity, and to make religion their business. It ill becomes those that are so keen about the world, and ready to run over one another in pursuit of it. It is certain the less religion we have here, the less heaven we shall have hereafter, supposing

a lower degree of it sufficient to carry us thither: Not to say that if we desire but little grace, it is an argument we have none at all.

I am ashamed to mention it as an objection, though some may be found so far perverting the gospel of Christ and scheme of Christian religion, as to make it, *that this savours of legalism.* We are to be saved, say they, by believing, and not working; by Christ, and in a way of free-grace. If the meaning be, that grace saves us without sanctifying us; that Christ was holy and devout in our stead, and to excuse us from being so; it is downright enthusiasm, and subverts the whole gospel. We are to be saved by Christ, it is granted; but he saves us *from our sins*, not *in them* (indulged and allowed). His salvation and grace appears most eminently in the refinement and perfection of our minds; the spirituality and devotion of our frames. The more of this any attain to, the more they are indebted to grace, and the more they will celebrate grace, both sanctifying and pardoning grace. In short, the gospel is the highest dispensation of religion; contains the strictest rules, as well as affords the strongest motives and greatest encouragements. Christ is the most sublime doctor and master, and his school the highest school of wisdom and divine philosophy in the world; and to say we hope to be saved by Christ, and thereupon take up with a low grovelling state of religion, is to disgrace our profession, and abuse our Master.

To conclude, every thing in our circumstances and case, calls us to our *Oratory.* God requires such work of us, and we need it. Our Master

has set us the most illustrious examples: Here we have the best company and best employment: This is *Peniel* and *Bethel*, if we behave aright in it; the house of God, and the gate of heaven: And though we must not expect to be transfigured, and shine like *Christ* on his mount, or *Moses* on his, we may hope for those enjoyments that will make us say, *it is good to be here*, longing at the same time to be above.

APPENDIX

BY ANOTHER HAND,

Referring to BENNET's *Oratory*, Vol. II. p. 228.

An Help to Self-Examination,

CONTAINING

Sect. I. A Paradigm, or Scheme of Christian Graces and Virtues.

Sect. II. A Catalogue of Sins against the Law and Gospel.

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Lam. iii. 40.

SECT. I.

A Scheme of Christian Graces and Virtues.

I. *A general View of the* SPIRIT *and* TEMPER *of a real Christian* *.

IT is *a new spirit*, with respect to its apprehensions, choice, affections, and actions, in things relating to God and the Redeemer, the soul and eternity, &c. *Eph.* iv. 23, 24.—*Renewed*

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* See Evans's Sermons on the *Christian Temper*.

in the spirit of your mind.—Ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is a *divine nature* in its original (born again, or from above, of God, of the Spirit, John iii. 3. 6. John i. 13.) in its tendency towards God and heaven, and in its resemblance, Col. iii. 10. *The new man, &c. after the image of him that created him.* It has in it light and love, holiness and righteousness, goodness and truth. The *same mind that was also in Christ*, Phil. ii. 5. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* The real Christian hopes to be with and like Christ for ever, 1 John iii. 2, 3.—*Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, &c.* It is a *spiritual mind*, preferring spiritual to carnal and temporal things; more solicitous for the interests of the immortal soul than of the body, has more savour of the things of God than of men, is most fervent in spirit when seeking the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and in case of competition would part with all things, life itself not excepted, for love to Christ, Rom. viii. 5—9. Luke xiv. 26. *Faith* is the main principle of the Christian temper: *A faith* of the operation of God, acting on the invisible things revealed in his word, so as to make the glory of God and the Redeemer, and the salvation of the soul, the highest care and business of life, 2 Cor. v. 7. *For we walk by faith, not by sight.* Phil. iii. 3. *For we are the circumcision, that worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, &c.*

II. *Branches* of the Christian temper. 1. In relation to GOD, or *Godliness.*

1. The most reverential *fear* of his all glorious Majesty, Job xiii. 11. *Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon*

you? Psal. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him.*

2. A supreme *love* of God, as possessed of all possible excellence; as the most suitable good for us; and under a sense of his continual goodness to us. Matt. xxii. 37, 38. *Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, &c.* Jos. xxiii. 11. *Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God.* Psal. cxvi. 12. *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?*

3. *Hope* in his mercy; Psal. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in —— those that hope in his mercy.*

4. Supreme *trust* in him; Jerem. xvii. 5,---9. *Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord; for he shall be like, &c. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, &c.* Eph. iii. 20. 1 Cor. i. 9, 10.

5. Giving *credit*, (or faith) to his testimony in all that he reveals; or believing, on the sole authority of God's word, doctrines that he offers to our faith, though they exceed our full comprehension; (as the doctrine of the *resurrection;* the distinction of the blessed Three, *Father, Son,* and *Holy Spirit,* which plainly runs through the œconomy of our salvation,) John iii. 33. *He that hath received his testimony, has set to his seal that God is true.* 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.*

6. A readiness to *obey him* without reserve, or a bent of will for universal obedience: Acts ix. 6. *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* 1 Cor. vii. 19, *Circumcision is nothing, &c. but the keeping of the commandments of God.*

7. Meek *submission* (the same as meekness towards God,) to the disposing will of the Lord; 2 Sam. xv. 26. *Behold! here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good in his sight.* Psal. xlvi. 10. *Be still, and know that I am GOD: I will be exalted, &c.*

8. *Repentance* towards God, or an humbled, broken heart before him, under a sense of sin. Ezek. xxxvi. 31. *Then shall ye remember—and shall loath yourselves in your own sight.*—Ezra ix. 6.—*I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee my God.*—2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation.* Psal. xxxviii. 18.—*I will be sorry for my sin.*

9. Designing *his glory* as the great scope and end of our actions; Cor. x. 31. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to his glory.* Rom. xiv. 7. *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth unto himself.*———*We live unto the Lord, &c.*

10. A disposition, and bent of soul to *worship* God in spirit and truth, and hold communion with him in secret and public devotions. In prayer, praise, reading and hearing his word, celebration of the sacraments, &c. to exercise pious and devout affections, Psal. lxiii. 1.—*Early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee.*—ver. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.*—ver. 5. *My soul shall be satisfied as, &c.* Luke i. 6. *Walking in all the commandments, &c.*

11. A prevailing care *to imitate* God, so far as he proposes himself to our imitation. Eph. v. 1. *Be ye therefore followers* (imitators) *of God as dear children,* 1 John ii. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk, even as he walked.* Matt. v. 45.

12. A studious concern *to approve* ourselves to God, in all our thoughts, designs, words, and actions. Gen. xxxix. 9.—*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Regarding him as beholding the heart, and ourselves as standing or falling by his sentence for time and eternity. Psal. xvi. 8. *I have set the Lord always before me, &c.* 2 Tim. ii. 15. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God.*—1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. —*He that judgeth me is the Lord.* 2 Cor. x. 18. —*Whom the Lord commendeth.*

In Relation to the Lord Jesus Christ as Mediator.

1. *Faith in Christ.* A firm persuasion of the truth of what the gospel testifies concerning him; a personal acceptance of him in all his characters, and giving our own selves unto the Lord, trusting in him to save us in his own way, Gal. ii. 16.—*We have believed in JesusChrist, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.*

2. *Love and obedience to Christ.* That he be esteemed the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely—For his own personal excellencies and glories, as he is the *uncreated* Son of God, —for his nearness and dearness to the Father, ——for the excellence of his work of redemption, and the unspeakable love he has expressed in that he died to wash us from our sins *in his own blood*,—as he is the most necessary medium of our happiness in this life,——And object of the saints' eternal felicity, together with God the Father, in those blessed regions where is *no need of the sun, nor of the moon, for God and the Lamb enlighten them*, Rev. xxi. 23. It must be sincere love in the heart; respecting him in *all his characters, king and prophet*, as well as

sacrifice and priest; a love transcending all love to creatures, and to life itself. Phil. iii. 8, 9. *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, &c.* —Love must work, (1.) In frequent devout thoughts of him. (2.) In careful observance of what he has left us in charge to believe, to practice, to bear, and expect, which includes *fidelity* and obedience to him during his bodily absence. (3.) A dutiful regard to the Holy Spirit, whom he has left to supply his room. (4.) In all kindness and respect to his friends, and favourites for his sake. (5.) In a concern for his interest, and endeavour to promote it, according to our station and capacities, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *For the love of Christ constraineth us, &c.* (6.) In a delightful regard for those things, by which we may be helped to remember, and converse with him; the *sacred scriptures*, the *Lord's-supper*, the *Lord's-day*, &c. (7.) In strong desires after the nearest and fullest enjoyment of him in heaven, (1 John iii. 2, 3.) Aspirations to be with him where he is, as our highest felicity, 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23. *Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.**

3. *Rejoicing in Christ*, a rest and satisfaction of mind, advanced to glorying and triumphing in the apprehension of his infinite excellence, and the benefits we receive by him, 1 Pet. i. 8. *Whom though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*

4. *A disposition to pay homage to him daily*, call upon his name, through him alone to come unto the Father, and to be looking and longing for his second appearance, Heb. ix. 28. *And*

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* Bennet's Christian Oratory, vol ii. p. 139. 142, 143.

unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin (not coming a sacrifice for sin as before) *unto salvation.* 2 Tim. iv. 8, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,—Unto all them also that love his appearing.**

In relation to the Holy Spirit in his Offices.

1. *Most fervent desires after the gracious influences* of the *eternal Spirit.* Heb. ix. 14. (to whom as Christians, we are equally devoted in baptism, and by his communion blessed, as to, and by the Father and the Son.) To renew the mind and heart in order to our holiness and happiness. John iii. 3—9. *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.* Psal. li. 11. *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me,* ver. 12. *Uphold me with thy free Spirit.*

2. *To seek after the genuine fruits* which his influences tend to produce: To long, and pray to be filled with that, with which the good Spirit of God is used to fill souls. Eph. v. 9. *The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth.* Gal. v. 22, 23. *Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* Eph. v. 18. *Be filled with the Spirit.* 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.—*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*—*Changed from glory to glory,* &c.

3. *To walk in the Spirit.* "They do "not so who in religion move in a circle, of "empty, sapless duties; but they *walk in the* "*Spirit,* who make a progress, who draw nearer "and nearer unto God, and become suitable

* See Bennet's Christian Oratory, Meditation on the Love of Christ, vol. 1. p. 272.—295.

" and like him, and fit for his eternal converse, " and for all the present service, whereunto he " calls them *." Eph. iii. 16—20. This walk must be with an humble sense of our *indigent state*, and our *unworthiness* of the least breath of influence from the blessed Spirit of God, for he *seeth the proud afar off, but giveth grace to the humble:* It must be with *dependence* on his aids; *obedience* to his dictates, strict observation of the rule of scripture, and *designing* all the strength we receive to the divine honour in the end. Rom. v. 3. vi. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 10—16. Eph. i. 16—20. *Diligent attendance* on all sacred institutions wherein the Spirit hath encouraged us to expect he will meet us; in *public ordinances*, and *private retirements*, to converse with God, his word, and our own souls: Jude 20. *Praying in the Holy Ghost.* Heb. x. 25. *Not forsaking*, &c. *Greatest watchfulness* against whatever would quench his motions, or resist and grieve him; as all fleshly lusts, all intemperance of passions and appetites, Eph. v. 18. *Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but*, &c. All inordinate cares and covetous desires are to be shunned, Eph. iv. 30, 31. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are*, &c. *A care to improve* and fall in with his influences as they are afforded. This is what we are to understand by the phrase, being *led by the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 14. Gal. v. 18. When excited to duty, we should arise, though corrupt inclinations, humour, temporal inconveniencies, sloth, &c. resist the good motion, we should arise to action. Cant. i. 4, *Draw me, we will run after thee.*

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* See How's Serm. on Gal. v. 25.

4. *To cherish the filial disposition*, rather than servile fear, Rom. viii. 15. *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage, again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

5. *To pray without fainting* for his return, when he seems withdrawn, and for his enlightening, quickening, sanctifying, strengthening, comforting influences day by day. Luke xi. 5—14. *If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, &c. how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Luke xviii. 1. *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint* *.

The Christian temper in relation to ourselves.

Under *sobriety* or living *soberly*, is contained,

I. For the *regulation of the mind*——

1. *The rational and wise exercise of the mind*, in sober consideration, or an habitual temper of mind disposed to attend to things sacred or common, after the most sedate and profitable manner; Eccles. x. 2. *A wise man's heart is at his right hand, &c.* Eccles. ii. 14. *His eyes are in his head, but, &c.* Luke xi. 35. *Take heed that the light which is in you, be not darkness.*

2. *The preference of the soul to the body*, and greatest diligence for its welfare. The apostacy hath inverted this order, and set appetites and passions on the throne, and enslaved the mind to the body. Reason and the higher powers, instead of giving law, receive law from appetite, and are pressed into its service to minister to it.

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* See *Bennet's Christ. Orat.* Medit. vol. 1. p. 306.—vol. 2. p. 1.

The religion of the Lord Jesus is designed to reinstate the reasonable spirit in its just empire over the whole man. Tit. ii. 11. et seq. *The grace of God which bringeth salvation,—teaching us that denying all ungodliness, &c. we should live soberly, &c.* Matt. xvi. 26, 27. *For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, &c.* John vi. 37. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you* (upon your most diligent labour to obtain it), *for him hath God the Father sealed.*

3. *Humility*, or a just sense of our own meanness, infirmities, and sins, and a true estimate of ourselves, compared with other beings. Col. iii. 12. *Put on therefore as the elect of God, &c. humbleness of mind.*

4. *Meekness*, or an habitual freedom of mind from anger and wrath, the passions being under a careful restraint and regulation. Col. iii. 12. *Put on—meekness.* 1 Pet. iii. 4.—*Meek and quiet, &c.*

5. *Patience*, or calmness of mind under afflictions, or in the delay of our hopes. Heb. 10. 36. *For ye have need of patience, &c.*

6. *Contentment*, or a spirit freed from all fretful, envious, and uneasy passions, and inordinate desires, raised by dissatisfaction with our own, or grudging the state of others. Heb. xiii. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, &c.* Phil. iv. 11. *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content*, Phil. iv. 6.

7. *Prudence*, or a recollecting things past, and looking forwards so far as may best enable us to manage all our concerns agreeable to reli-

gion and reason. Matt. x. 16. *Be ye therefore wise as serpents.* Eph. v. 17. *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

8. *Courage and constancy of mind* in the discharge of duty, notwithstanding any shame or suffering it may expose us to. 2 Pet. i. 5. *And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, or fortitude.*

9. *Vigilance*, or circumspect fear, whereby temptations are avoided, or the person better armed to encounter them. 1 Pet. v. 8. *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil goes about seeking whom he may devour.* Eph. v. 15, 16. *Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but wise, redeeming the time, &c.* Job xxxix. 16. *She laboureth in vain, without fear.*

II. *For the regulation of the body;* or due government thereof, and all its appetites and passions, conformable to the dictates of religion and reason, and the highest interests of our souls.

1. *Self-denial* and mortification of the flesh, so as to be more disengaged from hindrances, and better able to conform to the will of God, and promote the everlasting good of our immortal minds. Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth, &c.*

2. *Temperance*, or a moderate use of those things, which are for the support and pleasure of the body. Luke xxi. 34 *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time, your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, &c.*

3. *Purity and chastity* in body and soul (and the great preservative of it, *modesty*), a fixed, habitual *abhorrence* of all impurity in the inward, or outward man. It includes a keeping the

heart with all diligence, and a strict guard over the senses, against every thing which tends to pollute the mind. Jude 23. *Hating even the garment spotted with the flesh.* Matt. v. 8. *Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God,* ver. 28.

4. *Diligence and industry* in our calling, and to improve time and talents to our everlasting gain. Rom. xii. 11. *Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* Prov. xiv. 28. *In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips* (where labour is neglected) *tendeth only to penury.* Eccles. ix. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, &c.* Luke xix. 13. *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, occupy* (trade) *till I come.*

5. *To humble ourselves sometimes before God by fasting,* Matt. vi. 15. 17, 18. *Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance, &c. but when thou fasteth, &c.*

The Christian Temper in Relation to other Men; or to live *righteously.*

1. *To love our neighbour as ourselves;* this is a summary of the temper due from us to all our fellow-creatures, and is comprehensive of all the duties of the *second table,* as to love God with all the heart, is of the *first table.* Gal. v. 14. *All the law* (i. e. relating to our neighbour,) *is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Matt. xxii. 39. *And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love, &c.*

2. *Doing to others, as we would be done unto;* or rendering to every one such treatment, kindness, and allowances as if he was in my place, and I in his, I might from justice, charity, or

friendship, claim at his hands, Matt. vii. 12. *Therefore, all things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, &c.* Luke vi. 31. *And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*

3. *Justice and equity*, Prov. xxi. 3. *To do justice and judgment* (or equity) *is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.* Mic. vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good—to do justly.* Rom. xiii. 7, 8. *Render therefore to all their dues, &c.*

4. *Truth and faithfulness*, Col. iii. 9. *Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man, with his deeds.* Eph. iv. 25. *Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye every man truth, &c.*

5. *Mercifulness and compassion*, Col. ii. 12. *Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, &c.*

6. *Charity and beneficence* towards the poor. Matt. xxvi. 11. *For ye have the poor always with you.* 1 Tim. vi. 17—20. *Charge them that are rich in this world, &c. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, &c.* Heb. xiii. 16. *But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices, &c.* 1 John iii. 17. *But whosoever hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels, &c.*

7. *Charitable Judging*, in opposition to censoriousness, or pragmatical, rash, partial, and uncharitable judging. Matt. vii. 1. *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* 1 Cor. viii. 5. *Charity thinketh no evil.* John vii. 24. *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

8. *Peaceableness, and to overcome evil with good.* Matt. v. 9. *Blessed are the peace-makers;*

for they shall be called the children of God. Rom. xii. 18. *If it be possible, &c. live peaceably with all men,* ver. 21. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* Matt. v. 44, 45.

9. *To rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep:* To be touched and sympathize with our neighbour's good or evil, as if it were our own. 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. *We are members one of another; therefore, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.* Rom. xii. 15. *Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.* John xi. 31. *Jesus wept.* Luke i. 58. *And they rejoiced with her.*

10. *Public spiritedness.* Phil. ii. 4. *Look not every man on his own things* (swallowed up with self); *but every man also on the things of others.* 1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

11. *Gratitude towards benefactors, forgiveness of enemies, and meekness to all persons.* 2 Tim. i. 16, 17, 18. *The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, &c. and in how many things he ministered unto me, &c.* Luke vi. 37. *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven* (Matt. vi. 14, 15.) Tit. iii. 1, 2. *Put them in mind to be—gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*

12. *Hospitality and courteousness.* Rom. xii. 13.—*Given to hospitality,* 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 8. 1 Pet. iv. 9. *Use hospitality—without grudging.* 1 Pet. iii. 8 *Finally—be courteous.* Acts xxvii. 3. *And Julius* (an heathen centurion) *courteously intreated Paul, &c.* Acts xxviii. 7.

13. *Edifying conversation,* instructing, &c. and to restore a fallen brother in the spirit of meekness. Lev. xix. 17. *Thou shalt not hate*

thy brother—Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Coloss. 3. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing, &c.* Col. iv. 6. *Let your speech be always with grace, &c.* 1 Thess. v. 14. *Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, &c.* Gal. vi. 1. *If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, &c.*

14. *Christian benevolence*, in praying for and labouring after the spread of the gospel, for the salvation of all men, Jews and Gentiles, Mahometans and Infidels. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. *I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications—be made for all men.* 3 John 7, 8. *Because that for his name sake they went forth, &c. We ought therefore to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.*

The Christian Temper in particular Relations.

1. *Magistrates and governors* are directed to be just and faithful in their offices, as those who are to do good, and act for God, Rom. xiii. 3. *For rulers are not* (in their place and office) *a terror to good works, but to the evil.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. *Those who rule over men, must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*

2. *Subjects*, 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man* (or human constitution in government) *whether to the king as supreme, &c.* Rom. xiii. 1, 2. 5. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God, and they that resist shall, &c.*

3. *Ministers* are to be faithful men, qualified and apt to teach, and with humility to guide and govern according to the mind of the Lord Jesus. Acts xx. 25. *Take heed to yourselves, and*

to all the flock, &c. 1 Pet. v. 1—5. *Feed the flock of God, &c.* 2 Thess. ii. 1 Tim. iii. Tit. i. 7. & seq. 1 Thess. ii.

4. *People* to their ministers, that they be teachable, prize and improve opportunities of instruction, esteem them very highly in love for their *work's sake*, and maintain them. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know* (acknowledge and respect) *them which labour, &c.* (Heb. xiii. 17.) 1 Cor. ix. 14. *Even so hath the Lord ordained—should live of the gospel.*

5. *Husbands*, to treat their wives with all tenderness and endearing affection, and the highest example is proposed to imitation, Eph. v. 25. *Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, &c.* Col. iii. 19. *Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

6. *Wives*, to pay all suitable deference and regard and affection to their husbands, Eph. v. 23. *And the wife see that she reverence her husband.* Col. ii. 18. *Submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.* 1 Pet. iii. 1—7.

7. *Parents*, that they be careful in providing for the welfare of their childrens soul and bodies. Deut. vi. 7. *And thou shalt teach them diligently, &c.* Eph. vi. 4.—*Bring them up in the nurture, &c. of the Lord.* 1 Tim. v. 8.

8. *Children*, that they honour and obey their parents, and fear offending them. Lev. xix. 3. *Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.* Col. iii. 20. *Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing, &c.*

9. *Honour and respect to superiors*, Rom. xiii. 7. *Honour to whom honour is due.* Lev. xix. 32. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.* 1 Tim. v. 17.

Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, &c. chap vi. 1. *Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*

10. *Condescension towards inferiors*, and *one to another.* Rom. xii. 16. *Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.* 1 Pet. v. 5. *Yea all of you be subject one to another, and be ye clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.*

11. *Masters*, that they behave *prudently, justly*, and *gently* to their servants. Col. iv. 1. *And ye masters do the same things* (the same equitable good things) *unto them; forbearing threatenings*, (injurious, intemperate threatenings,) *knowing that ye also have a master in heaven.*

12. *Servants*, that they be subject to their masters with all fear, and be faithful and diligent with good will, and this not only to the good and gentle, but the froward. Eph. vi. 5—9. *Servants be obedient to them that are your masters, &c. in singleness of heart as unto Christ, &c.* (1 Pet. ii. 18—22.) Tit. ii. 9, 10. *Exhort servants to be obedient, &c. not answering again, not purloining*, (slyly defrauding) *but shewing all good fidelity.*

The Christian's temper towards things on earth. *and things* above. By being much conversant with God and the Redeemer in the duties of the *Oratory*, and public worship, and meditating often on *death* and *judgment*, *heaven* and *hell*, he obtains through grace,

1. *Moderation and growing weanedness* from worldly enjoyments. 1. Cor. vii. 22, 30, 31. *But this I say brethren that the time is short, &c.*

they that weep as though they wept not—and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away. Col. iii. 1. & seq.

2. *Growing affections for*, and longing after the presence of God and the Lamb, and the company, employments and enjoyments of heaven. Phil. iii. 14. *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Phil. iii. 20, 21. *For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile bodies, &c.* Matt. vi. 19. & seq.

Qualifications which should run through every branch of the Christian temper. (1.) *Sincerity*, which is the very soul of religion, and without it all is vain. Psal. li. 6. *Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts.*—(2.) *Constancy and perseverance*, 1 Cor. xv. 58.—*Be ye stedfast, immoveable, &c.* (3.) *A tender spirit*, or quick and ready sense and feeling in spiritual things, and a pliable disposition to yield to divine dictates and influences by the Spirit or Word of God, and engage in all discerned duty, in opposition to insensibility and hardness of heart, a stiff neck, iron sinew, and brow of brass, 2 Kings xxii. 19. *Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord when thou heardst—and wept before me, &c.* (4.) *Zeal*, or an ardent concern and growing endeavour to promote the glory of God and the Redeemer, and obtain eternal salvation. 1 Cor. xv. 58.—*Always abounding in the work of the Lord, &c.* Rev. iii. 19. *Be zealous, &c.* Lastly, *Prudence*, in judging what is in present circumstances our duty,

and how all opportunities of doing or getting good may be best improved. Eccles. viii. 5. *A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. To conclude.* A Christian must stand at the greatest remove from an inconsiderate, frothy, and vain temper, which transforms a man into an ape, and must cherish a thoughtful, *prayerful*, and serious spirit, and a steady attention of mind to the word of God, and to duty at all times. Phil. iv. 8. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any* (thing) *praise* (worthy) *if there be any virtue, think on these things.* 2 Tim. ii. 7. *Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.*

SECT. II.

A catalogue of sins against the Law *and* Gospel. *

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the Heavens. Lam. iii. 40, 41.

MAN'S CORRUPT STATE.

The corruption of man's nature calls for the most serious attention, deep humiliation, and inward lamentation; yet where it most reigns it is least noticed. *John* iii. 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh.* Job xiv. 4. *Who can bring that which is clean, from that which is unclean? Not one.* Gen. viii. 21. *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.* Ps. li. 5. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: And in sin did my mother conceive me.* Eph. ii. 3. *And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.* Rom. viii. 7. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God,* &c. Thus the *inward man*, the *understanding*, *memory*, *conscience*, *will*, and *affections*, are all depraved and perverted, and the *outward man* is become the instrument of unrighteousness; *tongues*, unruly, unsavoury, defiling the

* See the Confession of Faith, by the Assembly of Divines on the Ten Commandments.

whole body, &c. James iii. 6. All these corruptions proceed from the *heart uncircumcised*, or *unbaptized*. Acts vii. 51. *Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart, and ears*, &c. Mark vii. 20—24. Matt. xv. 10—21. *And he called the multitude, and said unto them, hear and understand, &c. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these things come from within, and defile the man.*

Actual sins against the *law, and gospel;* distinguishable into, sins national,* and personal, of omission, and commission; in thought, word, and deed.———*Thy commandment is exceeding broad*, Psal. cxix. 96. *Who can understand his errors? &c.* Psal. xix. 12, 13.

1. Actual sin against the *first table* of the law, or the duties of *piety*.

I. *Commandment* is violated, not only by *atheism, blasphemy, infidelity*, &c. (Ps. xiv. 1. *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God: They are corrupt, &c.*) but by sins of *omission*.

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* N. B. There are three things that will raise a sin to a public guilt, and make it become national.

1. Common practice.

2. Public establishment, or connivance.

3. General insensibleness. These, on special occasions, (as in time of war, &c.) should be particularly acknowledged, and bewailed. See *Wilkins* on the Gift of Prayer, p. 87.

When we do not most diligently seek after the knowledge of God, and all his glorious perfections: Not learning from his works, or his word, *not desiring the knowledge of him or his ways*, Job xxi. 14. Forgetful of God, and having nothing to do with him, Ps. x. 4. 11. *God is not in all his thoughts, &c.* The want of a stedfast faith, a lively hope in, and a firm trust and dependence upon God. Heb. iii. 12. *Take heed, brethren, lest, &c.* When he is not loved above all, no ardent desire of his presence, nor delight in the fruits of him. Rev. iii. 16. *So then because thou art lukewarm, &c.* When we neglect to praise him for his excellence, to adore his Majesty, or to be zealous for his glory. Deut. xxiii. 15. *But Jeshurun, &c.—forsook the God that made him*, When we are not fearful to offend, nor make haste to repent of those sins by which we have provoked him. Isa. i. 4, 5. *Ah sinful nation, &c. they are gone backward, &c.* By not endeavouring to bring those to repentance, whom, by our evil counsel, or example, we have caused to offend him. Rom. i. 32. *Who knowing the judgment of God, &c. have pleasure in them that do them.* When we do not yield a sincere obedience to all his commands—a patient submission under all chastisements—and an absolute resignation to his holy will, Prov. xiii. 13. *Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, &c.* Job xxxiv. 33. *Should it be according to thy mind? &c.* When we do not labour to please and honour him in all things—and are not truly thankful for all his blessings. 1 Thess. ii. 15. *They please not God.* Rom. i. 21. *Neither were thankful.*

By commission. When we serve or worship any other as God. Rom. i. 25.—or suffer any

thing to rival him in our hearts, by too much self-love, or affection for created good, 2 Tim. iii. 2. 4. *Lovers of their own selves—lovers of pleasure more, &c.* By bold profaneness, or by filthy hypocrisy. Job xxi. 15. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him? &c.* Isa. lxv. 5. *Which say, stand by thyself, &c. these are a smoke in my nose, &c.* By heresy, schism, apostacy, infidelity, and foolish doubting. Gal. v. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Heb. x. 39. Jerem. iv. 22. By presumption, despair, and carnal security, trusting in friends, wealth, &c. Zeph. i. 12. *Settled on their lees, that say in their hearts, the Lord will not do good, &c.* By pride, and high looks, secret lifting up of heart, and glorying in self, or the creature, instead of lying so low as God's greatness, and our vileness doth oblige us. Isa. lxv. 2. Isa. ix. 10. *The bricks are fallen down, but we build with hewn stone, &c.* By disobedience, impatience, and murmuring, instead of returning to him that smites us. Isa. ix. 13. *For the people turneth not to him that smiteth them, &c.* Jer. xliv. 15—24.

II. *Commandment* is violated by sins of *omission.*

When we slight and neglect the worship of God in public, or private in our families, or secret in the closet: When we do not worship him after a due manner in spirit and truth, with reverence and godly fear: When we have not a due regard to all the parts or kinds of *divine worship*, prayer, in all *its kinds*, the ministry of the word, (and religious reading it,) the administration of the sacraments, &c. or do not come to them with *due preparation*, and a heart engaged to do all therein *to the Lord, even to the Lord*, Zech. vii. 5, 6. *The wicked——will not seek after*

God, &c. Ps. x. 4. Matt. xv. 8. *This people draweth nigh, &c. but their heart is far from me.*

By sins of commission: idol-worship, or bowing down to images, pictures, &c. or invoking, in a religious manner, any creature. Isa. xlii. 8. *My glory will I not give to another, &c.* Superstition and will-worship. Isa. xxix. 13. *Their fear towards me is by the precept of men.* Matt. xv. 9. *But in vain do they worship me, &c.* When we rest in mere outward observances, forms, and shadows of religion. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. *And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them, &c.* By simony, Acts viii. 18. *And when Simon, &c. he offered them money, &c.* By sacrilege. Rom. ii. 22. *Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit, &c.* Mal. iii. 8. *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, &c.* Contempt of, and hindering the worship of God. Mal. i. 7—13 *Behold what a weariness is it, &c.* 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. *Forbidding us to speak, &c.*

III. *Commandment* is violated by *omission.*

Not glorifying God's holy name by all the ways we can; in meditation, speech, and behaviour. Deut. xxxiii. 51. *Because ye sanctified me not, &c.* Not reverencing him and his glorious titles, attributes, ordinances, words, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, and his works of nature, providence and grace. Rom. xv. 3, 4. Eccles. v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools, &c. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, &c.*

By commission. *The profane* and irreverent use of God's name, or whatever bears a relation to him. By *blasphemy.* 2 Kings xix. 22. *Perjury.* Zech. v. 3, 4.—*The curse—it shall enter the house of him that sweareth falsely, &c. Oaths and curses.* Jerem. xxiii. 10. *For because of swearing the land mourneth.* Rom. xii. 14. By hasty, unlawful, and superstitious vows, (Eccl. v. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.) By jesting with, perverting, or scorning God's word, Jerem. xxiii. 33, 34. 36. 38. *And when this people, &c. shall ask thee, saying,* (in a scornful way,) *What is the burden of the Lord? Thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the Lord,* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. *But they mocked, &c. and despised his words, &c.*

IV. *Commandment* is violated by *omission.*

When we do not keep holy to God his sabbath: Not laying aside all our secular businesses, and amusements; not endeavouring by reading, meditation, and prayer, to get our hearts into such an holy frame, as suits the day, and worship of the Lord. Isa. lviii. 13. Exod. xx. 10. Not obliging our children and servants to spend his day in religious exercises in public and private, but allowing of work or diversion. Nehem. xiii. 15. 17, 18. *In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses, on the sabbath, &c. And I testified against them, &c. Then I contended with the nobles.——What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? &c.* Jer. xvii. 24. & seq.

By Commission. *When* we profane the day by carnal ease and pleasure; by worldly employments; by visiting; by travelling unnecessary journeys; when we indulge ourselves, or

families, in any forbidden recreations; when we deny that rest to our servants, and our cattle, which God requires; when, however exact we may seem to be in external observances, our hearts are left to go after their covetousness and we do not honour God, or his day, from the heart, Amos viii. 5.—And the sabbath that we may set forth wheat. Ezek. xxxiii. 31. ch. xx. 21.

2. *Sins against the second table, or the duties of righteousness and sobriety.*

V. *Commandment* is violated (understanding by *father*, and *mother*, not only natural parents, but all superiors in age, and gifts, and especially such as by God's ordinance are over us in places of authority, whether in family, church, or state,) by *omission*.

In natural parents; when they do not love, cherish, and provide for; nor rightly educate, instruct and pray for their children; when they do not draw them to *good* by *examples*, and encouragements; nor deter them from *evil*, by corrections: Not regarding the scripture rule, Eph. vi. 4.—*But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In politic parents*, or governors, when they do not in the fear of God govern and protect; when they do not punish evil-doers, and praise them that do well; when they do not endeavour that God be honoured, truth maintained, and justice duly executed through their dominions; but sin against the rule, 1 Pet. ii. 14.—*Sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. In ecclesiastical parents*, or pastors, when they do not watch over the souls of the people, nor instruct in saving knowledge, nor

guide by their good examples, nor duly administer the holy ordinances of Christ, nor keep up the wholesome discipline of the church. Isa. lvi. 10, 11, 12. *His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, &c. loving to slumber.*———*They all look to their own way, every one for his gain,* &c. *I will fetch wine, &c. In economical parents,* or masters, and mistresses; when they do not esteem and sufficiently provide for their servants; are not just in their wages, reasonable in their commands, good in their examples, (having no concern for their immortal souls,) nor gentle in their reproofs. Jer. xxii. 13. *Woe unto him that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.* Col. iv. 1.—*Give—that which is just and equal, forbearing threatenings, &c. In superiors by age;* when they do not labour to excel in wisdom, sobriety, gravity, and authority of their words and actions, and good example, but sin against the rule. Tit. i. 2. *That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. In superiors by gifts;* when they do not instruct the ignorant, and bear the infirmities of the weak, contrary to the rule. Rom. xv. 1, 2. *We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, &c.—Please his neighbour for his good, to edification. In superiors in estate;* when they do not more largely employ their riches and influence to help the poor, and promote every pious and good design; contrary to the sacred rule. Gal. vi. 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially them that are of the houshould of faith. In all children, subjects,* and *inferiors;* when they render not the honour, love, obedience, and submission which they owe. Ezek. xxii. 7. *In thee have they*

set light by father and mother. In the worst times, *The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.* Isa. iii. 5.

By commission. In *children* when they are undutiful, stubborn, and disrespectful to their parents; contrary to the rule, Eph. vi. 1. *Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.* Deut. xxvii. 16. *Cursed be he that setteth light by his father, or mother. In subjects;* when they rebel, plot, murmur against, revile, curse, or wish evil to the king, and his ministers, and resist lawful authority, Rom. xiii. 2. *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. In the people;* when they defraud, contemn, slight, refuse to receive instruction, and reject their *pastors*, through pride, &c. 1 Tim. v. 18. *The labourer is worthy of his reward.* 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. *The time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap, &c. In servants;* when they disobey, neglect, and despise their masters, &c. Col. iii. 22, 23. *Servants, obey in all things, &c. In all these, when* they are false, unfaithful, and treacherous; when rude, unthankful, and ungrateful to any of their respective relations, contrary to the rule, Rom. xiii. 7. *Render therefore to all their dues, &c. Fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour, &c. In all inferiors* whatsoever, (in age, abilities, &c.) when obstinate, contentious, arrogant, and disrespectful in their behaviour towards any better or superior. 2 Pet. ii. 10.—*Despise government, presumptuous are they, self-willed, &c.* Jude 16. *These are murmurers, complainers, walking, &c. In all parents, governors, superiors;* when they

are tyrannical and cruel, rigorous and severe, froward and bitter against their respective inferiors; not considering, Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15. *If I did despise the cause of my man-servant, &c. What then shall I do when God riseth up? &c. Did not he that made me, &c.* Lev. xxv. 43. *—Not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God.*

VI. *Commandment* is violated by *omission.*

By not using all lawful means to preserve our own lives, and others. Eph. v. 28. *So ought men to love——as their own bodies.* Prov. xxiv. 11. *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, &c.* When we do not love our neighbour as ourselves, nor endeavour to procure and promote his health, safety, life, and happiness, temporal and eternal, Luke x. 30—33. *The priest and Levite——passed by on the other side, &c.* When we are not meek, kind, gentle, good, patient, compassionate, charitable, or ready to relieve, comfort, and pray for those whose necessities, miseries, and dangers require it. Rom. i. 31. *Without natural affection,—unmerciful.* When we are not inclinable to peace, easy to forgive injuries, and ready to return good for evil. Rom. i. 31. *Implacable.* Prov. xx. 22. *Say not thou, I will recompense evil; I will do so to him, &c.* Prov. xxiv. 29.

By commission. In suicide, or taking away one's own life; by needlessly putting our lives in danger; by engaging in duels, or any unlawful war. Acts xvi. 28. *Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm.* When we injure the body, or life of our neighbour designedly, directly or indirectly. Ps. v. 6. *The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.* Deut.

xxvii. 24. *Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly.* By contriving the abortion of children; by violence against our neighbour; by pursuing him with injuries, threats, and revenge; or entertaining hatred, envy, and malice in our hearts against him. Micah ii. 1. *Wo to them that devise iniquity, &c.* 1 John iii. 15. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.* When rashly, causelessly, and immoderately, angry with him; or revile, curse, or speak evil against him; and willingly grieve, vex, or disquiet him, being froward in heart, and of perverse lips. Matt. v. 22. *But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without cause, &c. shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* Prov. xi. 20. *They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord.*

VII. *Commandment* is violated by *omission.*

By not watching against all incitements, and opportunities of defiling ourselves or others; when we do not diligently watch and pray against temptation, nor are temperate in meats and drinks, nor ever mortify the flesh by fasting and abstinence. Job xxxi. 1. Prov. iv. 7, 8. Col. iii. 5, 6. When married persons have not a mutual love; constant and inviolate, full of compliance, sympathy, and forbearance. Prov. v. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. 1 Pet. ii. 7. *Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, &c.*

By commission. In unchaste thoughts, speech, or behaviour; when the vice of the heart is fed, and provoked by luxurious diet; by impure company, discourse, songs, books, and pictures, or by lascivious dresses, dances, or plays, or complacency in bringing to mind past impurities. Matt. v. 28, 29, 30. *But I say unto you,*

whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend (cause thee to offend), *pluck it out, &c.*

VIII. *Commandment* is violated by *omission.*

By not making conscience of the means used to get riches, nor being upright in our dealings. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. *But they that will be rich fall into temptation, &c.* When we are not industrious in our calling, to provide honestly for ourselves and families, or not frugal in expences. 1 Tim. v. 8. *But if any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* When dishonest, and make light of paying debts, &c. Ps. xxxvii. 21. *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.* No endeavour to procure and further the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others. Prov. xxvii. 23. Lev. xxv. 35.

By commission. In private theft, or open robbery; by oppression, extortion (1 Cor. vi. 7, 8.), griping usury, or vexatious law-suits. 1 Cor. vi. 6, 7, 8. When we detain the hire of the labourer (James v. 4.), cheat the orphan, widow, or stranger, or are unfaithful in our trust and contracts, deceitful in trade (using false weights, measures, &c.), conceal the defects of our own goods, or undervalue our neighbours. When we remove a land-mark, or make advantage of the ignorance or necessity of those we deal with. Luke xvi. 10, 11, 12.——*He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much, &c.* Deut. xxv. 13, 14, 15, 16.——*And all that do unrighteously are an abomination to the Lord.* 1 Thess. iv. 6. When we are too sparing, parsimonious, and covetous, or too lavish, wasteful, and prodigal. Prov. xi.

24.——*There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.* Prov. xviii. 9. ——*Is brother to him that is a great waster.*

IX. *Commandment* is violated by *omission.*

When we do not maintain and promote truth between man and man, nor are tender of our own, or neighbour's goods, name, and reputation; nor ready to judge and speak the best of him; conceal or excuse his infirmities, and vindicate his good name on all occasions. When we do not withhold our ears from hearing, our hearts from believing, and tongues from spreading evil reports concerning him. 1 Cor. xiii. 1 Cor. vi. 10. *Revilers shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* Ps. lvi. 5. *Every day they wrest my words: All these thoughts are against me for evil.* When we are not ready to bear testimony to the truth to end strife, or recover to the injured what damage he has sustained. Prov. xxxi. 9. *Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor. Open thy mouth for the dumb, &c.*

By commission. Through false accusation, plea, &c. against our neighbour, in courts of judicature. Hab. i. 4. When we speak too much or little in his cause, not according to truth, but deceitfully. 2 Chron. xix. 9.—— *Faithfully, and with a perfect heart.* When we censure or slander him, make invidious reflections, expose his infirmities, are whisperers, tale-bearers, backbiters, or countenance such. Tit. iii. 2. *Speak evil of no man.* Ps. xv. 1—4. *And speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not, &c.* When we raise suspicions, jealousies, heart-burnings, or dissemble, flatter, equivocate, and lie unto our neighbour. Psalm

cxx. 2, 3, 4.——*From lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. What shall be given unto thee? &c. Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.* Eph. iv. 25.—*Putting away lying, &c.*

X. *Commandment* is violated by *omission.*

When we do not resist the first motions of unlawful desire *of that* which is our neighbours. Deut. v. 21. *Neither shalt thou desire any thing that is thy neighbours.* When we do not learn to be contented in that condition in which God has placed us. 1 Tim. vi. 6. *But godliness with contentment is great gain.* When we have not a charitable frame of spirit, so that our inward affections tend to further his good. 1 Tim. i. 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and faith unfeigned.*

By commission. When we envy or repine at the wealth, prosperity, or happiness of our neighbour. When we passionately desire to possess any thing that is his, or rejoice at his sufferings. Esther v. 13. *Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as, &c.* Job xxxi. 29. When we entertain temptations, evil fancies, and desires in our mind, though we do not consent. Prov. xxiv. 9. *The thought of foolishness is sin.* Col. iii. 5. *Mortify therefore——inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, &c.* When we pursue the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, or the pride of life. 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, &c. is not of the Father, &c.*

Sins more directly against the Gospel.

All the above *violations* of the law (as evangelical obedience includes legal) are to be included here; and beside them, *as more immediately against the gospel.*

Opposition to, and *hatred of Christ, and his cause;* and vilifying the holy scriptures by word or writing. John xv. 25. *They hated me without a cause.* 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. *There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, &c.* Isa. xlv. 24.—*All that are incensed against him, shall be ashamed.*

Scepticism and gross infidelity, from a disinclination to conviction, and not impartially, in the fear of God, weighing the evidences antecedent, concomitant, inherent, subsequent, and subservient *, in proof of the heavenly mission of our Lord and Saviour. John iii. 19, 20, 21. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, &c.* John v. 39. *Search the scriptures, &c.*

Unsound faith; neither right *extensively*, nor *intensively.* Not *extended* to all revealed truths, and duties; in some persons through culpable ignorance, in others strong prejudices, and resolving to believe nothing deeper than the line of their reason can fathom, or further than is palatable, and consistent with the quiet of their consciences, in courses which at all hazards they are resolved to pursue. 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. *And their word will eat as doth a canker: Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth*

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* See *Baxter's* Reasons for the Christian Religion, &c.

have erred, saying, that the resurrection is passed already, &c. 2 Tim. i. 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words, &c.*

Not right *intensively*, or with heart-impression; mere notional and historical faith; however extended to all the doctrines, duties, promises, and threatenings of the gospel, yet the person is not *humbled*, and *poor in spirit* at the foot of Christ, nor is the glory of God and the Redeemer, and the salvation of his soul, his *main business*: i. e. he is not a *new creature.* 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: Old things are past away, behold, &c.* Gal. vi. 15 *.

A faith that *doth not purify the heart.* Acts xxvi. 18. *To open their eyes——which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Acts xv. 9. *And put no difference——purifying their hearts by faith.*

That *worketh not by love.* Gal. v. 6. *For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love.* 1 Pet. i. 22.

That *unites not the soul to Christ*, so as to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts. Gal. v. 24. *And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*

That *overcometh not the world.* 1 John v. 4, 5. *For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, &c.*

That *directs not the walk and course of life* by the will and example of his acknowledged Lord and Master; not walking by faith in the promises, in all seasons of *adversity* and *prosperity*,

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* See *Walker's* Sermons, *The Christian.*

&c. 1 John ii. 6. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

That *moderates not the fears and hopes* of the good or evil of things temporal, by looking to Jesus, and things eternal. 2 Cor. iv. 13.—*Having the same spirit of faith, &c. For which cause we faint not.——While we look not at the things which are seen, &c.* Heb. xii. 1, 2.—*Looking to Jesus, &c.*

That does *not trust and rely on Christ alone* (in the prescribed way) for justification and salvation. Rom. x. 3, 4.—*Have not submitted—unto the righteousness of GOD, &c.*

Impenitency, no humbling sense of the odious nature of sin; no searching out our offences, but hiding and extenuating them; no self-loathing for sins (so many and aggravated) against all the *love of the Father*, the *grace of the Son*, and the *strivings of the Holy Spirit;* no resolved and vigilant forsaking of sin, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. 2 Cor. vii. 11. *For behold, this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!* Matt. iii. 8. *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*

Despair of God's mercy. Jer. ii. 25.—*There is no hope.* 2 Cor. iv. 8.—*Perplexed, but not in despair.* 1 John i. 7. *But if we walk in the light —the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

Presumption, and turning the grace of God into an occasion of sin. Rom. vi. 1, 2.—*Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God*

forbid! Gal. ii. 17. Jude 4.—*Turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, &c.*

Disobedience to Christ. Luke vi. 46. *Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* 2 Thess. i. 7. 10.—*When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven---taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*

Making light of Christ, not esteeming him as the pearl of chief price, and willing to part with all to purchase it. Matt. xiii. 45, 46. *Found one pearl, &c.*

Great coldness and indifference about the honour of the sacred name, *into* which we were baptized, and all the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. Matt. xxii. 1—7. *And they would not come—but made light of it.* Phil. iii. 8. *I count all things but loss, &c.*

Slighting the benefits of redemption, peace with God through the blood of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit as sanctifier, &c. Meetness for, and a title to the heavenly kingdom, and communion with God in the way to it. Luke xiv. 16—20. *Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse, &c.*

Undervaluing the means of salvation, the holy scriptures, and prayer in secret; (desiring no closet, or Oratory,) public worship, the sacraments, &c. no spirituality in, if attendance upon them. John iv. 23, 24.—*The true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit, &c.* 1 Cor. xi. 20—30. Heb. x. 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, &c.*

No joyful progress in the works of faith, and labours of love to the full assurance of hope, even where the faith is unfeigned. 1 Thess. v.

16. *Rejoice evermore.* Phil. iii. 12—15. *Not as though I had already attained—but I follow after —I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling, &c.*

Inconstancy, and fickleness in the service of the Lord, with the consequences, despondency, diffidence, and the spirit of bondage again to fear. Gal. v. 7. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?* Rom. viii. 15. 2 Tim. 7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear,* (slavish fear and cowardice) *but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

Declensions in the love of the Lord, and in consequence in the fruits of holiness. Rev. ii. 4, 5. *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore, &c.* Rev. iii. 1, 2, 3.—*For I have not found thy works perfect* (but the best very defective) *before God, &c.*

Growing conformity to the world, in luxury, gaiety, pastimes, &c. with increasing inattention to the soul's immortality, the approach of death, and eternity, the coming of the Lord, the resurrection and judgment-day, heaven's joys, or hell's horrors. Rom. xii. 2. *Be not conformed to this world, &c.* 2 Pet. iii. 14.---*Seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, &c.* 1 Tim. v. 5. *That liveth in pleasure is dead, &c.*

UPON THE WHOLE:—*How shall man be just with* (justify himself before) *GOD? If he contend with him, he cannot answer him one* (or one time in his course of life) *of a thousand,* Job ix. 2, 3.——*Every mouth must be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before GOD.*———*Being justified* (if ever) *freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth* (in the most illustrious manner) *to be a pro-*

pitiation through faith in his blood, &c. Rom. iii. 19 ---27. *Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.* Acts xiii. 40, 41. ———*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that CHRIST JESUS is in you, except ye be reprobates.**

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* See Universal Monitor, a Table of Sins, &c. p. 268—291.

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AN

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